



TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Christmas Message

Jesus Christ has come to set us free. Free from what? Free from sin, surely. Free also from hopelessness and despair.

The first decade of the new century and the new millennium has brought international terror and in recent months a great economic recession, which some are calling a catastrophe.

In our own cities and towns, we read every day of men and women being deprived of income for their families. A retirement in dignity and comfort, once thought to be a bright hope for so many, seems now to have dimmed. Even the joy of a quiet old age lived in dignity seems less likely.

Young people find themselves captured by a lack of hope, which comes from thinking that pleasure has to be instant, or it brings no joy.

Where should we turn? And how do we guide our children? For surely we want to convey hope to them.

Pope Benedict XVI gives us the school of hope, which we find in prayer. Indeed, what is Christmas without time for prayer and adoration?

A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer. When no one listens to me anymore, God still listens to me. When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God. When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation that goes beyond the human capacity for hope, he can help me. When I have been plunged into complete solitude ...; if I pray I am never totally alone. The late Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, a prisoner for 13 years, nine of them spent in solitary confinement, has left us a precious little book: "Prayers of Hope." During 13 years in jail, in a situation of seemingly utter hopelessness, the fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness to hope — to that great hope which does not wane even in the nights of solitude.

— Pope Benedict XVI: "Saved in Hope," "Spe Salvi"

Hope is a gift of God. We realize the fullness of Christmas when we accept that the child is God's promise. Indeed, the child is God himself, and our nature has been joined to his.

Christmas is only fully realized in myself when I look at the crib and accept the promise it contains; namely, his presence in my heart and his promise of eternal life.

The babe in the manger is my salvation and my hope.

He gives me the strength to hope in his love, but only if in my full freedom I seek it. Let us observe Christmas this year by deepening our prayer, and let this prayer lead us out to the service of those in need among us — the refugee, the migrant, the homeless one.

No one should pass this feast by without hearing the question put to Jesus Christ: Who is my neighbor? No one should pass by the crib without kneeling in adoration and accepting in one's heart the hope of life to come, which the child of Bethlehem won for us by his death on the cross. The gift I give to him is myself.

A blessed Christmas to you all.



CNS PHOTO/COURTESY OF ART RESOURCE)

Angels surround Mary and Jesus in "Holy Night" by Italian Baroque painter Carlo Maratta. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Jan. 11 in 2009.

Mary feted in Warsaw

BY JODI MAGALLANES

WARSAW — Regaling her with bells, dance and flowers, parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Diocesan Shrine in Warsaw honored their namesake on her feast day, Dec. 12.

Tradition holds that on that date in 1531, Mary made her third apparition to a converted Indian peasant in central Mexico and charged him with asking the local bishop to build a church in that place. The bishop was ultimately convinced of her appearance by a gift of roses, which do not grow in that region, and roses continue to be one of her symbols.

Likenesses of the peasant Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, in the persons of various choir members and children, lent historical perspective and color to the Mass held in observance of her feast and celebrated by Bishop John M. D'Arcy.

"It is a joy to be with you in this place. I'm especially grateful to see so many young people," said Bishop D'Arcy, before switching languages and celebrating the rest of the Mass in Spanish.

Our Lady of Guadalupe has been instituted as the patron saint of all the Americas but is especially dear to Mexicans, Bishop D'Arcy said. Venerating her is an expression of our love for her and for her son Jesus Christ, he continued.

The bishop also encouraged the several hundred parishioners present to think of the Catholic Church as their home and to not let those who are not experiencing the fullness of the faith to distance them from the church.

"I give thanks to God for this parish and this church. ... Mary has sought out her children who live in Warsaw," he continued.

During the Mass Bishop D'Arcy also blessed the church's new tabernacle in it's

MARY, PAGE 5

Advent is nearing end

The final installment in Msgr.

McDonnell's reflection

Page 16

Tribute

Cardinal Dulles dies

Page 3

Christmas stories to warm the soul

Capturing the spirit of the season

Pages 11-13

No issue Dec. 28

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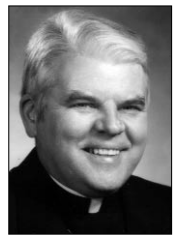
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Bishop observes festivities with feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



NEWS
& NOTES

BISHOP JOHN M. D'ARCY

A weekend to remember

I was off west on a cold Friday afternoon to Warsaw, the center point of our diocese, having been there just two days previously for a meeting of our Presbyteral Council. In the past, when I went to Warsaw, it was usually to Sacred Heart Parish — but now, it might mean the new church of Our Lady of Guadalupe; and that was the case on this cold Friday night. For this was the great feast of the Patroness of all the Americas, a Fiesta de Señora de Guadalupe. I was informed by Father Paul Bueter, the pastor, and Sister Joan Hastreiter, CSJ, the pastoral associate, that the church had been full from midnight until 2 a.m. for prayer, and the rosary, and song and dances of praise. The church cleared out about 2 a.m., but another group came at 5 a.m. This is what is called “Las Mañanitas,” the beginning of the observance of this feast day, which is especially important to Catholics from Mexico.

For Mass, the church was packed, standing room only — out the doors. A beautiful Eucharist of prayer and song. People came from all over the area; and it is a great consolation to this community, and certainly to me, that we now have this church sitting high on a hill for their prayer and worship.

Afterwards, I called my good friend, Savina Kralis, to come to the front so the congregation could greet her. It was Savina and her dear husband, Jerry — a Warsaw businessman, as I have reported earlier, who gave us the land for this church. They had driven north to Michigan once, and everywhere, saw signs that indicated that many of the Hispanic Catholics were attending Evangelical churches, and so they gave us this land — but Jerry put a condition on it — that we had to build a church for the Latino Catholics. It is done, and it is a blessing. Their daughter, Suzie Light, a member of our Catholic Charities Board, was also present.

Back home, late in the evening, after filling up my gas tank, which was almost empty. It was a joy the next morning to celebrate Mass for St. Vincent de Paul Society members of the Fort Wayne area at St. Joseph Church. A homily at Mass, and then after a substantial breakfast, I gave a talk similar to the one I had given a few weeks before to the staff of Catholic Charities. I took most of it from the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est.” In the first half is an extraordinary theological and philosophical analysis of love, but the second half talks about the church's work of charity; and what characteristics should mark the work of those engaged in the

church's ministry of Christ.

By my invitation, also present was Ampy Blaine. Ampy is a cantor in many of our churches in Fort Wayne, and a parishioner of the cathedral parish. A native of the Philippines, she has stepped forward to assist the Catholics who are refugees from Burma, many of whom came with the help of Catholic Charities. Ampy spoke with some emotion about her efforts to assist the Catholics and find transportation for them so that they can get to Mass on Sunday. Afterwards, several people offered to help.

I have correspondence from two priests, whom we hope to bring here around Christmas to celebrate Mass and hear confessions, and I am willing to ask some of our parishes in the Fort Wayne area if they can help with transportation and other needs that we are finding. Pope Benedict XVI makes clear that the service of charity in the church is for everyone and there are no conditions. It is a simple act of love. He also indicates that we have special obligations to those “of the household of the faith,” and with the help of Ampy Blaine, members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities and others, we will fill this obligation with love and tender care.

Sunday at St. Patrick's

This special weekend came to completion on a remarkable Sunday, as I celebrated the Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Patrick Church, Fort Wayne.

It is difficult to express the gratitude in my heart to the Society of the Divine Word, a congregation I knew well in New England, a great missionary congregation for what they have done for St. Patrick Parish.

With the coming of Father Chau Pham,
and now Father Tom,
the people have sensed a fresh beginning,
and a great sense of hope is evident.

It began when we obtained the assistance of Father Chau Pham, SVD, to give pastoral care to the Vietnamese community. Later, at the approval of his provincial superior, I appointed him pastor. I wrote to his superior asking if we could have a Spanish-speaking priest for the community of St. Patrick's. Alas, we have received Father Tom Ascherman, SVD. He is the assistant provincial and has served six years in Mexico, and is not only fluent in Spanish, but understands the Mexican culture. In fact, he has a doctorate in religion and culture from Catholic University and his doctoral dissertation included a study of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the culture surrounding it, the apparition itself, the popular devotion in Mexico, the spirituality of the Mexican people, and the nature of the conversion, which followed the apparition.

There must have been close to 1,200

people at this beloved old church. I read a few words in Spanish at the beginning of Mass. Father Tom gave a beautiful homily in Spanish with English interspersed. He talked about this feast day and related it to St. Patrick Parish.

After a fine Mexican lunch, I met with the lay leadership of the Latino community, along with Father Chau, and Father Tom. I learned about the strong prayer groups, which meet every week and saw clearly the lay leadership that is growing in this parish.

Some pastoral stability

I have been trying for considerable time to seek stability at St. Patrick's. Through the fault of no one, there has been a turnover in pastoral leadership. With the coming of Father Chau Pham, and now Father Tom, the people have sensed a fresh beginning, and a great sense of hope is evident.

Here is a statistic that all of our priests and people may find of interest. I was told there will be 250 baptisms this year at St. Patrick Parish. Currently, there are 250 in the religious education program. But if the rate of baptisms continues, that means in five or six years, there will be an enormous need for catechists. Remember now, that most of the children speak English, so we will be able to have help from other parishes and from our Office of Catechesis. Father Tom, with his strong experience in pastoral care pointed this out clearly. I was especially pleased to see my dear friends, Gisela Feil, director of religious education and Dorothy Cuellar, who teaches at St. Patrick's. There are many physical needs at St. Patrick's. The St. Patrick School, which serves as a meeting place, needs a roof. There is need for tuck-pointing in both the school and the church. But we are better as a church, when there are challenges like this. I met with the Hispanic leadership for over an hour. The challenges were clear, but so were the joy and the hope.

Another statistic

I had an occasion this week to meet with some people from the Women's Care Center. They are seeing 45 women every day in the Fort Wayne area and over 10,000 in all their centers. We have statistics for their first two years in Fort Wayne. During that time, the number of abortions in Allen County dropped by 20 percent.

So there is an exciting weekend for you, and I will see you all in two weeks.



PROVIDED BY MARTA GUTHIER

A mountaintop church in Colombia is shown in this photo.

Customs, traditions in the celebration of the Mass

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

FORT WAYNE — One beautiful aspect of the Catholic faith is how Mass is universal. You can travel anywhere in the world and find comfort in the familiar. In my opinion, however, there are a few nuances in other traditions and cultures that add to the beauty of the Mass.

In September, I traveled to France with my grandmother for leisure. While there, I was both a spectator and participant in the Mass. As a biased observer, I noticed a few differences between the American and French celebration of the Eucharist.

Perhaps most striking was the seating arrangement. People were seated all around the church, both in front and behind the altar. It reminded me of pre-Vatican II when the priest's back faced the congregation. Furthermore, the amount of altar servers was astounding. There were half a dozen or more — as opposed to our traditional two or three.

Additionally, children were more active celebrants in the Mass. The priest invited them up to the altar for a special homily. It was touching to see a few dozen French children actively engaged in the word of God.

The abundance of incense was refreshing. Even in the massive cathedrals of Europe, you can detect the sweet smell of the substance. I also noted how the collection was brought up with the bread and wine, as if to signify it, too, was a sacrifice.

As I walked out of Mass nearly an hour and a half later (yes, another difference), I was thankful for the subtleties that make our religion more interesting.

Marta Guthier, a bilingual counselor at the Women's Care Center in Fort Wayne and native Colombian, said traditions in her homeland vary from those in American Catholicism.

In Latin American cultures, it's not unusual to dedicate churches to Jesus or the Blessed Virgin. For example, she knows of churches in her country with the monikers of the Infant Jesus and Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The faithful go to these churches on a pilgrimage to ask for "special favors," she explained. They might donate groceries or other



PROVIDED BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

Today's Catholic contributor Lauren Caggiano, is shown in France in front of the Cathedral of Reims.

trinkets as a sacrificial rite.

And there is no lack of faithful in a country that is 90 percent Catholic. It's not unusual to celebrate Masses simultaneously in a church, chapel and soccer field, she said. And sometimes there is standing room only.

The Mass itself is more "charismatic" than how we know it in America. Colombian priests wear brightly-colored handmade stolls with hand-stitched details. And the liturgy is rife with interactive music.

For the most part, Colombians' faith is deeper than most Americans, despite their economic status, Guthier has observed.

"They're happy because they believe in God's will," she said. "Whatever the outcome is, they're grateful for it."

Whether it be a Mass at Sacre Coeur in Paris or a liturgy in a mountaintop church, it's comforting to know that our faith can be a commonality in a foreign land. I hope we, as Catholics, can learn to embrace these differences and add to the richness of our Catholic identity.

Cardinal Dulles dies at 90; Jesuit theologian made a cardinal in '01

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal Avery Dulles, a Jesuit theologian who was made a cardinal in 2001, died Dec. 12 at the Jesuit infirmary in New York, Murray-Weigel Hall. A cause of death was not released but he had been in poor health. He was 90 years old.

Cardinal Dulles had been the oldest living U.S. cardinal. His death was announced by the New York-based Jesuit provincial's office.

Cardinal Dulles gave what was described as a farewell address in April, delivering the Laurence J. McGinley lecture at Jesuit-run Fordham University. In the presentation Cardinal Dulles reconfirmed his faith, his orthodoxy, his spirituality and his commitment to the Society of Jesus.

He also offered a final word against the materialism, relativism, subjectivism, hedonism, scientism and superficial anti-intellectualism he said is found in modern society.

Later that month he had a private meeting with Pope Benedict XVI during the pontiff's visit to New York.

"It was a lovely meeting," said Dominican Sister Anne-Marie Kirmse, the cardinal's executive assistant for the past 20 years. "The pope literally bounded into the room with a big smile on his face," she told Catholic News Service.

The session was called a significant meeting of "two of the leading Catholic theologians who interpreted Vatican II for a generation," by Father James Massa, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

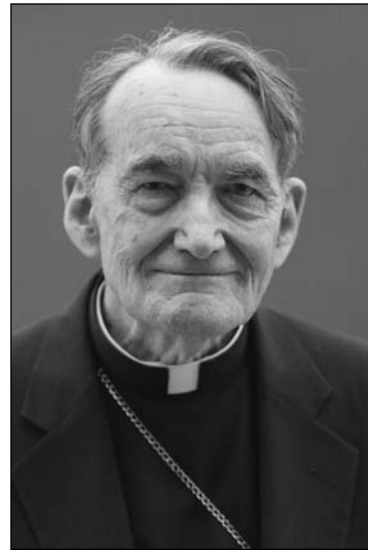
Pope John Paul II, who began the practice of naming as cardinals priest-theologians who were already past age 80 and therefore ineligible to vote in a conclave, included Cardinal Dulles in the group of cardinals created in 2001.

Cardinal Dulles, the son of former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and nephew of onetime CIA director Allen Walsh Dulles, both of whom served in the Eisenhower administration, became known in his own right for his groundbreaking 1974 work "Models of the Church" — one of 22 books published under his name — in which he defined the church as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, servant and community of disciples, and critiqued each.

Born Aug. 24, 1918, Cardinal Dulles was the grandson of a Presbyterian minister. He joined the Catholic Church as a young man after he went through a period of unbelief.

"In becoming a Catholic, I felt from the beginning that I was joining the communion of the saints," he said at a 2004 lecture in New York on author C.S. Lewis. "I found great joy at the sense of belonging to a body of believers that stretched across the face of the globe."

He entered the Catholic Church



CNS FILE PHOTO/BOB ROLLER

Jesuit Cardinal Avery Dulles poses for a photo prior to a lecture at The Catholic University of America in Washington in 2004. The Jesuit theologian, who was made a cardinal in 2001, died Dec. 12 in Murray-Weigel Hall at Fordham University. He was 90 years old. Cardinal Dulles had been the oldest living U.S. cardinal.

in 1941 while a student at Harvard Law School. He served in the Navy in World War II, then entered the Jesuits after his discharge in 1946. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1956.

Cardinal Dulles had been the Laurence J. McGinley professor of religion and society at Fordham since 1988. He also had taught in Washington at the former Woodstock College, now folded into Georgetown University, from 1960-74, and The Catholic University of America, 1974-88. He had also been a visiting professor at Catholic, Protestant and secular colleges and universities.

Past president of both the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Theological Society, Cardinal Dulles served on the International Theological Commission and as a member of the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. He also served as a consultant to the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine.

His awards include the Croix de Guerre, the Cardinal Spellman Award for distinguished achievement in theology, the Boston College Presidential Bicentennial Award, the Christus Magister Medal from the University of Portland, the Religious Education Forum Award from the National Catholic Educational Association, *America* magazine's Campion Award, the F. Sadlier Dinger Award for contributions to catechetical ministry, the Cardinal Gibbons Award from Catholic University, the John Carroll Society Medal, the Jerome Award from the Roman Catholic Library Association of America, Fordham's Founders Award, and more than 30 honorary doctorates.

Cardinal Dulles had two other relatives who served as secretary of state: great-grandfather John W. Foster and great-uncle Robert Lansing.

The cardinal was a frequent lecturer on religious and church

matters well into his 80s.

In a 2005 lecture, Cardinal Dulles said, "The true spirit of the (Second Vatican) Council is to be found in, and not apart from, the letter" of the council texts. "When rightly interpreted, the documents of Vatican II can still be a powerful source of renewal for the church."

Also in 2005, he said the 1551 teaching of the Council of Trent on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist "remains today as normative as ever." The council described the presence with three adverbs — "truly, really and substantially" — that are "the keys that open the door to Catholic teaching and exclude contrary views," he said.

In a New York lecture on the start of the 2004-05 Year of the Eucharist, Cardinal Dulles said Catholics must be aware "the church is in dire need of renewal." Although "holy in her head and in her apostolic heritage," the church remains "sinful in her members and in constant need of being purified," he said, adding many Catholics are ignorant of church teachings, and a few even reject the teachings.

At the first National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington in 2004, Cardinal Dulles said that although for Americans "there is nothing more sacred to our lives than the idea of liberty" the "negative pull" of freedom from responsibilities is drawing the nation into immorality.

"Once freedom operates in a moral vacuum, it becomes meaningless," he said. The United States has proven successful at overthrowing tyrannical regimes, Cardinal Dulles said, but seems unable to create anything more than a "moral vacuum, which is painfully filled by the demons of fraud, drugs and violence."

He said, for example, in post-Taliban and post-communist societies "too many citizens begin to hanker for a return of the ousted rulers who provided at least a minimum of order and security."

In another 2004 talk Cardinal Dulles called for "a rebirth of apologetics," the defense of Christian faith by reason, because "the time is ripe, the need is urgent."

But he called for an apologetics centered on "the living testimony of believers" rather than the traditional arguments from philosophy and historical science, one focused not on the traditional question of "how we get to God" but "how God comes to us."

"The apologetics of personal testimony is particularly suited to the genius of Catholicism," he said. "Such testimony invites us not only to individual conversion but to communion with the whole body of believers."

At an 80th birthday Mass in his honor in 1998, then-Father Dulles told the assembly, "My own adult life has constantly revolved about faith. ... Even in my days as an undergraduate student, my interest was absorbed in the search for faith."

Vatican document warns certain new research violates moral principles

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A new Vatican document warned that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to “take the place of his Creator.”

The latest advances raise serious questions of moral complicity for researchers and other biotech professionals, who have a duty to refuse to use biological material obtained by unethical means, the document said.

The 32-page instruction, titled “Dignitas Personae” (“The Dignity of a Person”), was issued Dec. 12 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Benedict XVI personally approved the text and ordered its publication.

The document represented an updating of the congregation’s 1987 instruction, “Donum Vitae” (“The Gift of Life”), which rejected in vitro fertilization, human cloning, surrogate motherhood and nontherapeutic experiments with human embryos.

The new instruction expanded on those teachings or presented new ones in the following areas:

- **Stem-cell research.** The document recognized that stem cells have opened new prospects in regenerative medicine. It said it is morally acceptable to take stem cells when they do no serious harm to the subject, as is generally the case when tissues are taken from an adult organism, from the umbilical cord at the time of birth or from fetuses that have died from natural causes.

On the other hand, it said, it is always “gravely illicit” to take stem cells from a living human embryo, because it invariably causes the death of the embryo.

- **The morning-after pill and other anti-implantation methods.** The document said an embryo is constitut-



CNS ILLUSTRATION/EMILY THOMPSON

An illustration depicts a human fetus in a womb. The new Vatican document “Dignitas Personae” (“The Dignity of a Person”) warns that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to “take the place of his Creator.”

ed after fertilization of the egg, and drugs and techniques that prevent its implantation in the uterine wall are morally illicit because they intend to cause an abortion — even if they don’t actually cause an abortion every time they are used.

Anyone who seeks to prevent the implantation of an embryo that may have been conceived, and who therefore requests or prescribes such a drug, generally intends abortion, it said. The use of such anti-implantation methods “falls within the sin of abortion” and is gravely immoral; when there is certainty that an abortion has resulted, there also are serious canon law penalties, it said.

- **Gene therapy.** It said genetic engineering that aims to correct genetic defects by intervening on nonreproductive cells, a process called somatic-cell gene therapy, is in principle morally acceptable. The effects in this case are limited to a single person.

But is it not permissible to make genetic modifications that seek to transmit the effects to the

subject’s offspring, called germline cell therapy, because of potential harm to the progeny, the document said. It said that “in the present state of research” germ-line cell therapy in all its forms is morally illicit.

- **Embryo manipulation and “adoption.”** The document repeated earlier condemnations of the in vitro creation of human embryos, a technique often used in fertility treatment, first because it separates procreation from the conjugal act in marriage, and second because in practice unused embryos are often discarded, thus violating the principle that “the human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception.”

Freezing such embryos is itself a violation of ethics, because it exposes them to a serious risk of death or harm, the document said. Most of such embryos remain “orphans,” it said. Despite the good intentions of people who have suggested a form of “prenatal adoption” to allow unused frozen embryos to be born, such a propos-

al would be subject to medical, psychological and legal problems, it said.

- **Freezing of human eggs.** The freezing of oocytes, immature human egg cells, has been introduced as part of an in vitro fertilization technique, in which only those eggs to be transferred to the mother’s body are fertilized. The document said the freezing of oocytes for this purpose is morally unacceptable.

- **Human-animal hybrid cloning.** The document rejected as immoral recent efforts to use animal eggs to reprogram human cells in order to extract embryonic stem cells from the resulting embryos. These efforts represent a grave offense against human dignity by mixing animal and human genetic elements capable of “disrupting the specific identity of man,” it said. In addition, use of the resulting stem cells would expose humans to unacceptable risks, it said.

In a section titled “The use of human ‘biological material’ of illicit origin,” the document examined the ethical questions posed for people who, in research or the production of vaccines or other products, deal with cell lines that are the result of a procedure the church considers immoral.

In cases where there is a direct connection, such as embryonic experimentation that inevitably involves the killing of the human embryos, such acts “always constitute a grave moral disorder,” it said.

It said the situation was more complex when a researcher works with cell lines produced apart from his research center or obtained commercially. The document rejected the “criterion of independence,” as formulated by some ethics committees, which argues that using such biological material would be ethically permissible as long as there is a clear separation between those causing the death of embryos, for example, and those

doing the research.

The document said it was necessary to distance oneself in one’s ordinary professional activities from the injustice perpetrated by others, even when immoral actions are legal, in order not to give the impression of “tacit acceptance of actions which are gravely unjust.”

“Therefore, it needs to be stated that there is a duty to refuse to use such ‘biological material’ even when there is no close connection between the researcher and the actions of those who performed the artificial fertilization or the abortion, or when there was not prior agreement with the centers in which the artificial fertilization took place,” it said.

In the wider framework, it added, there are differing degrees of responsibility, and grave reasons may in some cases justify the use of such “biological material.” For example, it said, the danger to the health of children could permit parents to legitimately use a vaccine that was developed using cell lines obtained illicitly. In such a case, it noted, the parents have no voice in the decision over how the vaccines are made. At the same time, it said, everyone should ask their health care system to make other types of vaccines available.

The document said couples need to be aware that techniques such as pre-implantation diagnosis, which is used in artificial fertilization and leads to the destruction of embryos suspected of defects, reflects a growing “eugenic mentality.” It cited an increasing number of cases in which couples with no fertility problems are using artificial means of procreation in order to engage in the genetic selection of their offspring.

The document closed with an appeal to view the church’s teachings not as a series of “no’s” but as an effort to protect society’s weakest and most defenseless against forms of unjust discrimination and oppression.



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JODI MAGALLANES

Bishop John M. D'Arcy celebrated Mass Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Diocesan Shrine in Warsaw. He joined parishioners Sunday, Dec. 14, at St. Patrick Church, Fort Wayne, to celebrate the festivities associated with Our Lady of Guadalupe.

MARY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

new location behind the altar. At the end of the Mass, he also took a moment to present to the faithful the wife and daughter of departed Warsaw resident Jerry Kralis, who were present at the Mass. Kralis donated the land on which the parish was constructed after long years of searching and raising money for a site.

"He made a sacrifice for you,

and for me," Bishop D'Arcy said.

A guest choir and band of mariachi musicians took over musical responsibilities for the Mass while the usual choir members and musicians instead donned traditional Aztec clothing, notably including ankle bracelets of bells, and performed a traditional Aztec dance after the offertory.

Participants filled the downstairs hall afterward for dinner, yet dozens more stayed upstairs to pray before Mary's image next to the sanctuary or to honor her with the gift of their roses.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, Bishop D'Arcy celebrated the noon Mass at St. Patrick Church in Fort Wayne as part of the weekend festivities of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

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Christmas decorations a reminder of new life from Christ, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The traditional decorations of Christmas are reminders that the light and love of Jesus Christ bring new life to all who wait in darkness, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope spoke about Christmas trees as symbols of new life Dec. 12 when he met a delegation from Austria, which donated the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square, and he spoke about Nativity scenes as reminders of God's love for humanity when he blessed figures of the baby Jesus Dec. 14 before reciting the Angelus. "Before the Nativity scene, we experience Christian joy, contemplating in the face of the newborn Jesus the face of the God who drew near to us out of love," the pope said during his Angelus address. The day's reading from St. Paul, he said, called on Christians to rejoice because the Lord is near. Although the Catholic Church believes in the second coming of Christ, there is no need for "alarmism," he said. "The nearness of God is not a question of space or time, but a question of love: Love is drawing near."

Planned Parenthood gift certificates for holidays called 'offensive'

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — A holiday gift-certificate campaign by Planned Parenthood of Indiana "is offensive because Christmas is about celebrating the gift of human life," said the director of the pro-life ministry office of the Indianapolis Archdiocese. Sister Diane Carollo made the comments in a nationally televised interview Dec. 3 on ABC's "Evening News." The Planned Parenthood gift certificates are being advertised as "the gift of health," and can be redeemed for "services or the recipient's choice of birth control method," according to the organization's press release, which has generated local, state and national media coverage. Planned Parenthood is the nation's largest abortion provider. In a Dec. 4 interview with *The Criterion*, Indianapolis' archdiocesan newspaper, Sister Diane called it "outrageous that Planned Parenthood would have the audacity to offer lethal gift certificates for the Christmas holiday." A member of the Servants of the Gospel of Life, she has headed the pro-life ministry for nine years.

Cincinnati welcomes its new coadjutor, Archbishop Schnurr

CINCINNATI (CNS) — The appointment of Coadjutor Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr to Cincinnati is Pope Benedict XVI's way of "expressing the love of the Lord for this portion of his people," Cincinnati Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk told the congregation at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains Dec. 7 for a Mass of welcome. More than 170 priests, 11 archbishops and bishops, and a capacity crowd of laity filled the church to welcome the

CHRISTMAS TREE SEEN IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE



CNS PHOTO/ALESSANDRO BIANCHI, REUTERS

People walk in the rain in front of the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 13.

new coadjutor archbishop, who was bishop of Duluth, Minn., when he was appointed to his new job Oct. 17. The liturgy was made more special by the presence of 24 members of Archbishop Schnurr's family, who traveled from Iowa, Nebraska and Pennsylvania to be with him as he concluded his first week in Cincinnati. In his homily, Archbishop Pilarczyk noted that the day's readings shared a theme: an admonition that people pay attention. "We all need to hear this message from time to time simply because it's so easy not to pay attention to the Lord Jesus," he said. "We live in a world that is really good at keeping us distracted."

Diocese reaches out to workers and families affected by GM closure

MADISON, Wis. (CNS) — The Catholic Church in Wisconsin is reaching out to offer solidarity and hope to the more than 5,000 families who will be affected by the impending closure of a General Motors plant in Janesville and layoffs by other area employers. More than 1,200 hourly GM workers are to be laid off effective Jan. 2 after their holiday vacation. The GM plant is scheduled to stop production Dec. 23. Many other area businesses have announced layoffs; they include Woodbridge Group of Brodhead, affecting 70 workers, and Allied Automotive Group of Janesville, affecting 117 employees. The GM situation also will affect other related businesses, such as day care providers and area merchants. Madison Bishop Robert C. Morlino was scheduled to preside and preach at a special Dec. 16 Mass in Janesville for the

unemployed and underemployed and their families. Several area pastors who planned the liturgy were to be the concelebrants.

Former Cleveland diocesan CFO to spend year and a day in prison

CLEVELAND (CNS) — The former financial and legal secretary of the Cleveland Diocese will spend a year and a day in federal prison for failing to report income he claimed was additional compensation in an off-the-books arrangement with diocesan officials. U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aldrich ordered Joseph H. Smith, 52, to report Jan. 1 to a still unnamed federal prison. A jury in July found Smith guilty of six tax-related charges after a seven-week trial. Aldrich announced the sentence to a silent Smith Dec. 11 in U.S. District Court. She said she settled on the sentence to allow Smith, an accountant and an attorney, to qualify for at least 56 days of good behavior credit and allow him to serve time in a federal institution rather than a local jail. As part of the sentence, Aldrich ordered Smith to make restitution between \$200,000 and \$400,000. She said the exact amount will be determined at a later date. Philip Kushner, Smith's attorney, said the amount owed is only \$48,000.

Spokesman: Church opposes considering homosexuality a crime

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican spokesman said the Catholic Church is clearly against considering homosexuality a

crime, but is wary of international declarations that use the issue to promote a political agenda based on sexual orientation. The spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, made the comment Dec. 11 in response to questions at a Vatican press conference. In early December, a leading Vatican diplomat drew criticism from gay-rights groups when he said the Vatican opposed a proposed U.N. declaration to endorse the universal decriminalization of homosexuality. The diplomat, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's apostolic nuncio to the United Nations, said such a declaration might be used to put pressure on or discriminate against countries that do not recognize same-sex marriage. Father Lombardi, in his latest comments to reporters, said the Vatican was not conducting a battle against the United Nations or weakening its opposition to discrimination against homosexuals, which is clearly stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Holy sites need legal protection, say speakers at Rome conference

ROME (CNS) — Every Friday afternoon in Jerusalem's Old City, thousands of Muslims walk to Al Aqsa Mosque to pray, thousands of Jews walk to the Western Wall to pray and thousands of Christians carry a cross in procession along the Via Dolorosa, recalling the Way of the Cross. Daniel Seidemann, an Israeli lawyer, said the Friday afternoon scene "is not touchy-feely, it's not fuzzy warm and when the people glance at each other, more often than not it is a glance of disdain or contempt, but the ... thing works."

Seidemann, who describes himself as a Zionist committed to ensuring Jerusalem remains a city where Jews, Christians and Muslims coexist, spoke in Rome Dec. 10 at an international conference on different legal and religious approaches to the status of holy places and religious institutions. The conference was sponsored by the interdisciplinary program in law and religion at Catholic University's Columbus School of Law in Washington. Marshall J. Breger, a professor at the law school, told Catholic News Service, "We believe the political issues — as difficult as they are in places like Palestine and Israel — cannot be resolved without recognizing the religious issues involved."

Wife's love gave Austrian martyr strength

ROME (CNS) — Blessed Franz Jagerstatter, an Austrian farmer beheaded for refusing to serve in the Nazi army, had the strength to follow his conscience because of his wife Franziska, said Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna. With the 95-year-old widow and the couple's three daughters in the front row, Cardinal Schonborn participated in the Dec. 9 presentation of a new biography in Italian, "Christ or Hitler? The Life of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter." The book launch was held in Rome's St. Bartholomew Church, which Pope John Paul II designated as a shrine to martyrs of the 20th century. The original handwritten copy of Blessed Jagerstatter's "spiritual testament" is on a side altar in the church, along with letters and objects owned by other victims of Nazism and communism in Europe and of dictatorships in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

UN receives petitions for and against abortion as 'universal right'

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — On the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Dec. 10, petitions for and against declaring abortion as a "universal right" were presented to U.N. members. More than a year ago, Marie Stopes International, a London-based abortion advocacy group, initiated a petition drive calling for "women's rights to contraception and safe abortion" to be "protected and supported through reformed laws and policies at all levels." The group presented their signatures during a U.N. General Assembly session marking the anniversary of the 1948 U.N. declaration. The group's Web, www.globalsafeabortion.org/call-toaction.html, noted that 651 people had signed the petition: "Global Call to Action for Women's Access to Safe Abortion" by Dec. 10. The Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute in New York launched a petition of its own in October called the "U.N. Petition for the Unborn Child and the Family." The petition, posted online at www.c-fam.org/publications/id.95/default.asp, had gathered more than 367,000 signatures, including 165,000 from English-speaking countries, by Dec. 10.

Bishop Dwenger to offer SAT prep course

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Dwenger High School will offer an SAT prep course on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7:30 p.m. running Jan. 20 through March 5 and will include diagnostic testing, six verbal and six math sessions. The \$170 fee includes the course text. The class will address all areas of the SAT, and is open to any high school student in the Fort Wayne, Allen County area. For more information or to register call (260) 496-4700 or visit www.bishopdwenger.com.

Ancilla College receives Lilly grant

DONALDSON — Ancilla College has been awarded a matching continuation grant from the Lilly Foundation in the amount of \$375,000, the college announced.

The grant is a continuation of a previous five-year, \$750,000 grant made by Lilly in 2004. As per the terms of the agreement, Ancilla College will continue many of the programs developed under the initial grant in 2004 while establishing new programs that will benefit its students. Ancilla College will also match the grant with \$375,000 of its own.

Current programs established under the earlier grant enabled Ancilla College to increase the number of articulation agreements with four-year colleges and establish internship opportunities and academic skills programs for its students.

Programs to be established under the new grant will provide a \$15,000 matching grant for iStan technology, fund continued support of articulation agreement programs, provide supplemental instruction for students in the nursing and science programs, support a collaboration with the Gallup organization to provide a career assessment program (StrengthsQuest), and foster partnerships with local high schools.

'We Believe in You' takes shape

DONALDSON — Ancilla College is experiencing a record number of adults registering for classes under the "We Believe in You" program, according to Erin Alonzo, director of admissions.

The "We Believe in You" program is designed for prospective students 21-years and older who have never attended college.

"We Believe in You" allows a student to take up to three credit hours free of charge. In addition, all students in the program will have an academic advisor to assist them with all aspects of attending college for the first time, including the registration process, filing a financial aid application, determining their education opportunities and more.

Classes are scheduled to begin Jan. 12, 2009, and will all be held on sight at the Donaldson-based campus. Upon completion of a course, students will have access to their transcripts.

"With these challenging financial times it is nice to see so many people taking advantage of this

AROUND THE DIOCESE

STUDENTS HOST ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER



PROVIDED BY ANNE GRIFFITH

The eighth-grade class of St. Anthony de Padua School hosted their annual spaghetti dinner on Nov. 14. The dinner is the major fundraiser for the class, and a tradition that the entire parish supports. Profits earned pay for the class trip to Chicago, in addition to the eighth-grade retreat. Dedicated parents and students transformed the gym into "Antonio's" for the evening, while Papa Vino's provided the main course. Over 800 diners were served.

opportunity to go to college for free," said Alonzo. "Earning a college degree gives people hope for a brighter future. Ancilla is here to give the people in our local communities the opportunity to begin their college education."

For more information on "We Believe in You," contact the Ancilla College Admissions Office at (574) 936-8898.

Craft show serves needy

NOTRE DAME — Saint Mary's College's Office for Civic and Social Engagement (OCSE) hosted a unique craft show on Dec. 12 that raised money to buy Christmas gifts for those who can't afford them this year. The craft show featured the original works of over 35 local artisan in LeMans Hall and was part of the fifth annual "Twelve Days of Christmas Project," sponsored by OCSE.

As part of Twelve Days, students, faculty and staff participated in special events, service projects and fundraisers to purchase food, clothing and gifts for Michiana families in need this Christmas season. The college is supporting 15 families through the Salvation Army, Grandparents as Parents (GAP) and Title I Schools in South Bend — Coquillard, Lincoln, and Warren Primary Centers — where Saint Mary's students tutor children, and 15 individuals through REAL Services and Mental Health America.

Bishop Luers events

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School has announced the following upcoming events:

- Bishop Luers High School will host a Trivia Knight party to benefit LuersKnight. This event will take place on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish on Fairfield Ave. Tables of 10 consisting of friends, coworkers, family members, etc. (adults only please) will be organized to play trivia against other tables. Snacks and soft drinks will be provided. Beer, wine and margaritas will be available for purchase. To register a table of 10 in advance, call Pat Landon at (260) 747-6110 or Dierdre Fazio at (260) 456-9853. Cost is \$10 per person.

- A financial aid information meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 12, at 6:30 p.m. in the school library. Parents interested in information regarding Bishop Luers High School financial aid for the 2009-2010 school year should attend an information meeting. All financial and scholarship information will be shared and all questions will be answered. This is a general meeting and financial aid applications will be available at a registration.

- Freshman registration will be Jan. 21-22 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Students with last names beginning with A-L should register between 6:30-7:30 p.m. and for those beginning with M-Z, between 7:30-8:30 p.m. Students should bring copy of

their birth certificate, ISTEP results, recent report card and \$120 registration fee. For more information please call the admissions office at (260) 456-1261 ext. 3141 or e-mail Jenny Andorfer at jandorfer@bishoplueers.org.

ACE commissions task force on Latino Catholic education

NOTRE DAME — The University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program has established a new task force to examine the participation of Latino children in Catholic schools.

Established by Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame's president, the task force will convene over an eight- to 12-month period via in-person and Webcast meetings, the first of which occurred Dec. 11 on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The committee will be co-chaired by Juliet V. Garcia, president of the University of Texas at Brownsville, and Holy Cross Father Joseph Corpora, pastor at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church and School in Portland, Ore., with ACE leaders facilitating the efforts of the task force and the subsequent implementation of its proposed strategy.

Research shows that Catholic schools serve low-income minority students — especially Latinos — far more effectively than comparable public school options. In Catholic schools, such students are 50 percent more likely to graduate from high school and 250 percent more likely to go to college than their peers in public schools. While some 75 percent of Latino immigrants are Catholic, only 3 percent send children to Catholic schools.

GIRL SCOUTS HELP NURSING HOME, WOMEN'S CARE CENTER



PROVIDED BY CHERYL HEISE

The St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, Girl Scout Troop No. 650 fifth-grade juniors recently held a service oriented meeting where they filled bags with candy for Miller's Merry Manor, a nursing and rehabilitation center. They also made blankets, shown above, for the Women's Care Center in Fort Wayne. The center is an organization whose mission is to assist young women in pregnancy crisis — giving them an alternative to abortion.

Where do you find your strength?

There is a line in one of my favorite hymns that goes something like this: "O Lord, you are the center of my life. I will always praise you. I will always love you. I will always keep you in my sight."

It is good for each of us, no matter what our age, to reflect on what or who is the center of our lives. Where do we get the primary strength to live our lives? What keeps us going? The answer to this question has a huge impact on the way we live.

For some it is accumulating material things and the latest gadgets. Riches and making lots of money are very important to them. They act as though the accumulation of wealth and goods will solve all their problems. These are the same people who often despair when they lose their jobs.

Then there are those people who find their strength in success. The desire to get ahead drives their lives. They want to

climb up the ladder and feel important. They seem to thrive on competition and often show little regard for others who may get in their way. They are the people at school or at work who seem to have little time for the important people in their lives. They are often so busy trying to reach their goals that they neglect those closest to them. There are other examples.

For us Christians, hopefully God is the center of our lives. True strength comes from our relationship with him. Jesus spoke of this throughout his public life. He made it very clear when he declared, "I am the vine and you are the branches." We believe that it is our intimate connection with him that enables us to live as he taught.

Our faith and hope in God gives us the strength we need to live meaningful lives despite the pain and suffering we see all around us. It is our relationship



SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

with God and his grace that enables us to live through hard times and difficult situations without becoming hopeless or giving in to despair. We know and believe in a faithful God who will take care of all he made. Knowing that God truly loves us and cares about our well-being and that of all creation is the source of our inner strength.

To make God the center of our lives doesn't just happen. We must cooperate with God's grace and strive to consciously be aware of his presence in our lives and in the world. This comes from cultivating a life of prayer and loving service, trying to live as he taught.

Here are a few questions to help us see how well we are doing. Is God usually the first one we call upon when we need something or is he the last resort? Do we call upon the Lord frequently or only when we have problems? Do we ask God for guidance when we have to make major decisions or does God not even factor into the process?

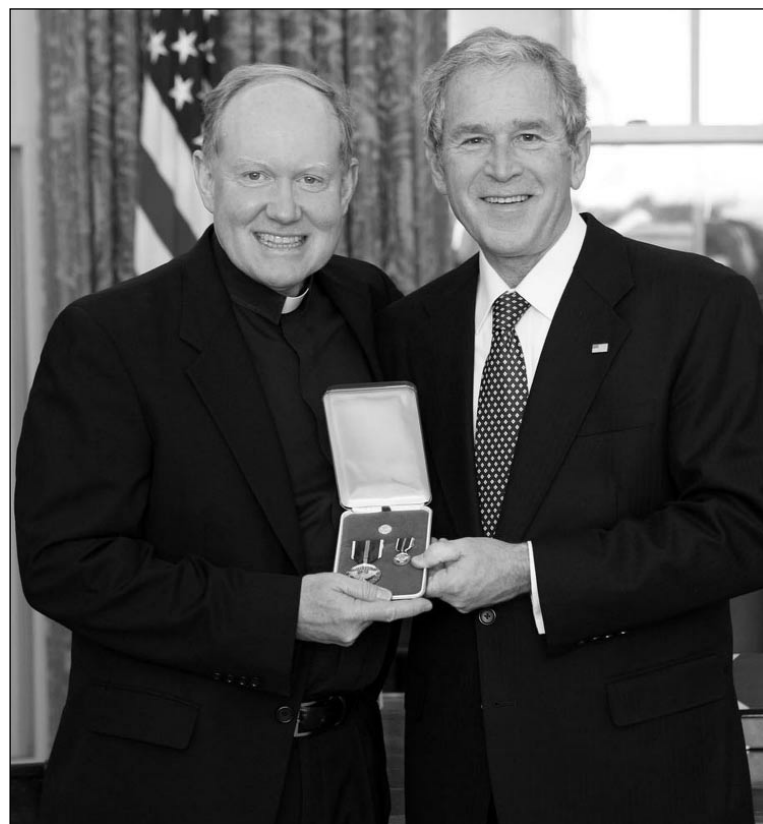
Do we go to Mass because we have to or because we want to give God praise? Do we make room in our busy day for prayer? What would our lives be like if we didn't believe in God?

Spiritual growth doesn't just happen automatically. It takes a conscious decision and ongoing effort to bring God from the fringes of our lives to the center.

Perhaps during this coming year we can strive to make God more and more a regular part of our lives and not just when we need something.

Sister Margie Lavonis, CSC, a former campus minister and vocation director, works for the Sisters of the Holy Cross communications department. mlavonis@cscsisters.org.

THE CUTTING EDGE



CNS PHOTO/CHRIS GREENBERG, COURTESY WHITE HOUSE

President George W. Bush stands with Holy Cross Father Timothy R. Scully, a professor at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, after presenting him with the Presidential Citizens Medal at the White House Dec. 10. Father Scully was among 24 people who were honored for their good works.

Father Scully receives Presidential Citizens Medal

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross Father Timothy R. Scully, professor of political science and director of the Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) at the University of Notre Dame, received a 2008 Presidential Citizens Medal in an oval office ceremony held Dec. 10.

One of the highest honors the president can confer upon a civilian — second only to the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the Presidential Citizens Medal recognizes U.S. citizens who have performed exemplary deeds of service for the nation. Since its establishment by executive order in 1969, some 100 people have received the award.

One of 24 recipients of this year's medal, Father Scully was honored for "committing his life to strengthening communities through faith-based education that prepares individuals for a lifetime of achievement, service and compassion," according to a White House statement.

"Through his leadership at the University of Notre Dame, he has developed innovative ways to support under-resourced schools. The United States honors Father Scully for demonstrating that every human being has boundless potential," the statement concluded.

The cofounder of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program and a fellow of the university's Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Father Scully focuses his research on comparative political institutions, especially political parties and democratic governability.

He oversees the work of the university's Center for Research on Educational Opportunity and ACE, Notre Dame's signature program that provides hundreds

of Catholic schoolteachers to under-served communities across the country.

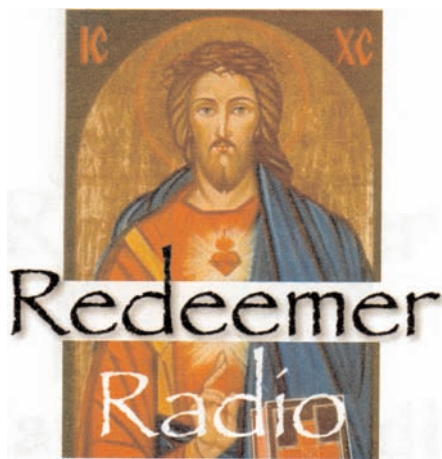
Father Scully served as Notre Dame's executive vice president from 2000 to 2003, and as vice president and senior associate provost from 1994 to 2000. He serves as a fellow and trustee of the university.

Ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1981, Father Scully was graduated from Notre Dame in 1976 and earned master's and doctoral degrees in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a member of the Trinity Foundation Board in Dublin, Ireland; the Woodrow Wilson Center Board; and the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, D.C., as well as the New York Council on Foreign Relations. He serves as a trustee of the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Established in 1994, the ACE program provides college graduates an opportunity to earn master of education degrees while serving as teachers in understaffed Catholic schools nationwide. In exchange for a modest stipend and a tuition-free graduate program, the ACE participants make a two-year commitment to teach in these schools.

More than 85 recent college graduates from a wide variety of educational disciplines enter ACE each year. They take courses and participate in teacher training projects at Notre Dame during their two summers in the program and are assigned to full-time teaching positions at schools in some 30 cities and 14 states during the academic year. After two years, the students graduate with a master's degree, and about 75 percent elect to remain in education.

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Solving a problem with Maria: The power of friendship

Growing up six miles from a cousin who was born six weeks after you offers a fertile foundation for friendship. Ours didn't disappoint.

Maria and I attached quickly, and we publicly broadcast that bond with matching attire. Identical sun dresses. Duplicate necklaces. And twin magenta visors that Grandma decorated with puff paint. Even our names had a similar ring: Maria Louise, Christina Marie.

In spite of those saintly selections, we wanted to be bad; we saved our coins to buy candy cigarettes, flicking them in slow, dramatic puffs.

We wanted to be brave, but when we camped out in a backyard tent, a strange sound paralyzed us in fright. We screamed bloody murder and nearly sent my aunt into cardiac arrest.

Above all, we wanted to be together. That, we were.

Our parents didn't let us watch "Grease," but we adored the "Sound of Music," and our viewing approaches were in sync: We fast forwarded through "Climb Every Mountain" and rewound "Sixteen, Going on Seventeen," replaying the gazebo kiss a third time for good measure. Oh, to be 16!

Our cousins were all younger, which gave us license to be a bit bossy. Under our expert tutelage, the Capecchi cousins re-enacted "So Long, Farewell" in basements at birthday parties. As directors, Maria and I enjoyed the prerogative of casting ourselves in the prime roles, which meant we alternated as Leisel, yearning for

champagne. "Yes?" "No!"

Over the years, our interests and appetites advanced along a similar arc. We played varsity soccer against each other. We car-pooled and contributed to the same teen publication. (Although, after watching Maria perform willowy solos at ballet recitals, I conceded that, in one arena, we would diverge.)

And then, before we knew it, we were both packing up and moving off to college to be noble English majors: Maria north, me, south.

We stayed in close touch. Frequent e-mails. Some letters. And occasional visits, when we whispered in our dorms until someone nodded off. More than ever, it seemed, there was so much to discuss. We were trying to uncover God's will for our lives, untangling it from others' expectations and our own fears.

We were still joyful, but life had managed to become more complicated. It was helpful to talk it through, knowing, for once, there was no need to censor raw emotion and half-formed thoughts. I knew I could solve any problem with Maria. As friends and cousins, our effortless understanding has been a steady source of comfort.

Maria began grad school right after college and then got a job. I started with a job, then moved onto grad school. When she visited me, she saw my exhaustion and validated it. If she had survived to tell her own horror stories, I knew I would, too. It was a well-timed oomph up the mountain I was climbing.



**TWENTY
SOMETHING**
BY CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

And that was the other thing: We were noticing tell-tale signs of getting older, which, experienced together, made them a little less freaky. Like that never-ending nun song — it had become inspirational.

Maria and I have searched "high and low" for the dreams we were meant to pursue. And today, we are kneeling at the entrance, inhaling deeply and thanking God.

When Maria told me she was engaged to John, we rejoiced. It was, like so many moments before, a Visitation our own, joy shared so swiftly and fully it causes the Christ within to leap, the Holy Spirit sparking an electric current.

"For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears," Elizabeth told Mary, her heart leapt for joy.

This month when we remember Mary's life-changing news, we celebrate friendship, the bonds that keep us warm when it's cold outside.

I will stand beside Maria, the bride, and smile: We may not be bad, but we're two for three: brave and together.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinacap@gmail.com.



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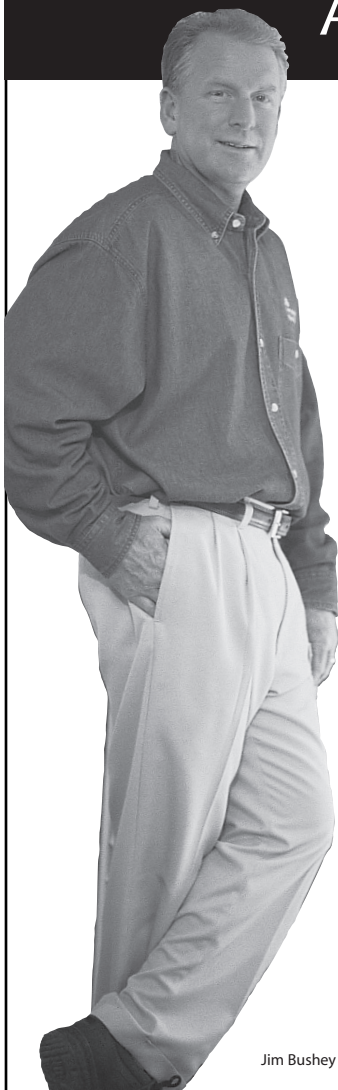
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Notre Dame grad invites Holy Cross Sisters to proposal

BY SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

SOUTH BEND — Jake Teitgen, who now lives and works in Chicago, has a special relationship with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. So much so that he wanted them involved when he returned to Saint Mary's to propose to his future wife, Alicen Miller.

A whole new world opened to Jake when he signed up for Notre Dame Professor Ed Kelly's freshmen composition class that included a community service component.

"He took us on a tour of several different service sites in South Bend, but our first stop was Saint Mary's Convent. I thought I was just there to meet people and have a look, but you try saying no to a group of Holy Cross Sisters!" said Teitgen. "Lee Ann Moore, the activities and volunteer director, had me signed up for a weekly trip within an hour."

Jake spent a semester at Queen of Peace Convent, the

memory-care unit. He enjoyed it so much he continued to visit and brought friends from Circle K, a community service club at Notre Dame.

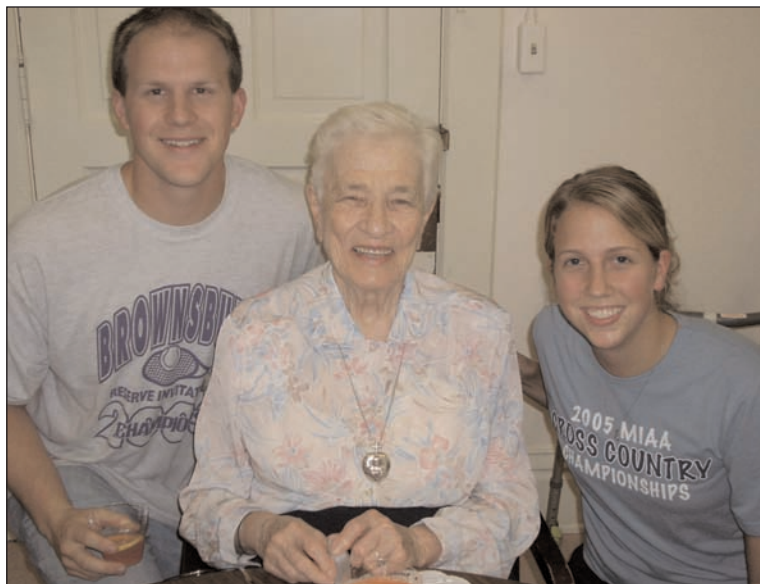
"It would be an understatement to say that Circle K and Saint Mary's Convent really hit it off. Within three years we started to visit three times a week and involved hundreds of volunteers who spent time with the sisters," he said.

Besides their visits to Queen of Peace Convent, the Circle K sponsored events for all the retired sisters in all the different convents at Saint Mary's. "I spent three years making Lee Ann's hair turn gray by planning all sorts of fun and unique activities."

These included a Mardi Gras parade, a tail-gate party for 100 students and 100 sisters, Wii video games, a Mexican fiesta and a circus. "We also spent the entire 2007 fall semester practicing with the Queen of Peace sisters for a hand bell choir concert for the rest of the convent."

"May you have
as much love
and happiness as you
brought to us."

SISTER ODILE



SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

Sister Odile, member of Queen of Peace, proposes a toast for Jake and Alicen.

Alicen was instrumental in getting the Circle K club at Saint Mary's College rejuvenated. One of its priorities was to get to know and spend time with the Sisters of the Holy Cross who founded the school. After just a few trips to the convent, she similarly fell in love with the sisters and their warm hospitality. She set up weekly trips for volunteers as well, and committed her club to give small gifts to the sisters on most holidays.

"Even if it was just a piece of candy with a note, Alicen made sure the sisters knew they were

loved and remembered throughout the year," he said.

Both grew very close to the sisters and they were a significant part of both their lives. The convent had always been a place of love, faith and perspective for them. So Jake decided he wanted them present when he formally asked Alicen to be his wife. But he wanted it to be a surprise.

On Sept. 25 Alicen received a message from one of her professors that said there was an emergency at the convent and she needed to see someone named Lee Ann. She hurried over and

Lee Ann led her to the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, attached to Saint Mary's Convent where Jake was waiting along with the sisters from Queen of Peace and several friends from both campuses.

"I thought it was important to ask her in God's house, as he will certainly be the determining factor in how our relationship lives," Jake said.

After the proposal, the Queen of Peace sisters threw them an engagement party with decorations, refreshments, gifts and a lot of love. Sister Odile got up, called them by name and gave a toast saying, "May you have as much love and happiness as you brought to us."

Commenting on his relationship with the sisters, Jake said, "Calling trips to the convent 'service projects' or 'volunteering' has always been a stretch for me. I keep insisting that these wonderful women of God who live and work at Saint Mary's Convent are just loving friends. I could no sooner stop coming to visit them than I would stop keeping in touch with my best friends my own age. Coming to spend time with my friends at the convent is fun, relaxing and often adventurous. But more than that, these women who have dedicated their lives to God are an example of what real service, honest faith and true love are really about."



Peace and Thanksgiving at Christmas...

At a time when gifts and joy represent the holiday scene, the real Christmas spirit, that of the Holy Family and the first Christmas is of the poor, of uncertainty, of faith and charity.

It is in that spirit that Bishop John M. D'Arcy and the Board of Directors and the staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities wish to express appreciation to those who have come forward to provide food, furniture, clothing, money and their time for someone they do not know... for someone in need.

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Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend



ANN CAREY

St. Paul's activity coordinator, Cindy Robinett, left, started the bell choir and is the choir's director and accompanist.

St. Paul's handbell choir rings in the season

BY ANN CAREY

SOUTH BEND — Many of them never have played a musical instrument before, and many can't read music, but 20 senior citizens at Sanctuary at St. Paul's retirement community are making beautiful music together in St. Paul's handbell choir. Just barely one year old, the bell choir has received so many requests for performances this month, that some invitations had to be turned down.

St. Paul's activity coordinator Cindy Robinett had been music director for 11 years at Mishawaka First Christian Church before joining St. Paul's staff nine years ago. At the church, she had started a bell choir and knew what an enjoyable experience it was, so she decided to try the idea at St. Paul's.

"We started small, but as people saw the fun, they got interested and came and said they'd like to join," explained Robinett, who is always recruiting new members for the group.

Robinett had a lot of assistance in getting the bell choir off the ground. She and the administrators at St. Paul's were not sure how well the choir would catch on at first, Robinett said, so funding was not available initially to purchase bells. Grace United Methodist Church came to the rescue by loaning its bells to the group every week for nine months.

"So, it's only because of Grace United Methodist that we have our handbell choir," Robinett said.

Also offering assistance during the early days were members of the bell choir at Mishawaka First Christian Church, who came to St. Paul's to perform and to help choir members with their technique.

Once it became apparent that the bell choir was a big hit, St. Paul's purchased approximately 50 bells for the choir, comprising three full octaves and fourth octave add-on. Since the bells are different sizes, Robinett assigns bells to each choir member depending on what the person is comfortable with strength-wise. Consequently, the largest bells

tend to be played by the men in the choir. Each choir member polishes his or her bells at the weekly practice, and like all handbell choirs, members wear gloves — black for practice, white for performance — to protect the bells from oil and dirt on the hands.

The bell choir learned eight selections during its first 11 months, Robinett said, and in the last two months has learned eight more for Christmas, doubling its repertoire. Depending on what works best for each choir member — four of whom are in their 90s — Robinett marks each person's sheet music either with colors or with circles around words to indicate rings and stops, so choir members can participate well, even if they can't read music.

"The best thing about it is that they're learning something new and realizing that whatever stage of life they're in, they can learn something new and enjoy sharing it with other people," Robinett said.

"They're very proud of what they do, and they should be," she continued. "They're very dedicated; they work very hard. It takes a lot of practice and concentration."

It also takes a good music director, and choir members appreciate Robinett greatly. Choir member Mary Ellen Handwork, who plays piano by ear but does not read music, explained their success by saying that Robinett is "a wonderful teacher."

The St. Paul's handbell choir has been invited to perform at several churches this year. Robinett said that most people find the bells to be very uplifting, and the church congregations have made choir members feel very welcome, supported and valued. She added that the handbell choir would welcome invitations to perform at area churches. Robinett may be reached at (574) 299-2250.

The St. Paul's handbell choir will perform Saturday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. at University Park Mall in Mishawaka. On Tuesday, Dec. 23, the handbell choir will join St. Paul's singing choir for performances at St. Paul's at 2 and 7 p.m. The performances are free and open to the public.

Christmas — past and present

Alas, we have entered the world of Barbie, Hannah Montana and High School Musical at the Johnson home.

I guess I never really thought that my kindergartner would be excited about Hannah Montana and High School Musical. Our satellite television family package doesn't include the Disney Channel, so I didn't think my daughter knew that they even existed.

Now I knew Heather liked Barbie and my now-antique Big Jim action figures, which she inappropriately calls "Daddy's Barbies," fleeing all the machismo away. Big Jim is a rugged camper who likes to fish, play basketball and travel in a RV.

Unfortunately, Big Jim is a dwarf when compared to Barbie — who looks like "Amazon woman" when placed next to him — and uses most of the spare leg space in Big Jim's RV.

Heather does not really ask for a lot of things. She mentions Hannah Montana, High School Musical — but I think her friends and peers "talk it up" at school — deep down inside she doesn't care.

But it made me think of some of my Christmases past. And, I decided I want to try something "crafty" this year — a house for Barbie, Hannah Montana, whoever — assembled in the storage

room of my basement and out of cardboard scraps. Heather doesn't have a clue, so don't tell her.

When I was a kid, cardboard would never go to waste. I especially was keen on the nearby Ossian Heyerly Bakery doughnut boxes — they could be easily cut and transformed into miniature three-dimensional houses and buildings for our Matchbox cars. My brother and I erected handcrafted buildings — farms, subdivisions and shops — from salvaged cardboard, including cereal boxes. The buildings would get placed on our electric train board grid. I think that's why my brother works as an estimator in build-

MANY HATS



BY TIM JOHNSON

the blizzard of '78, so we could really enjoy those awesome gifts even more.

Now back to the house for Barbie. I've been salvaging heavy cardboard. At age 6, Heather is still a bit rough on

toys. Hopefully, this project will make it intact through Easter. With the help of a few coworkers, I'm collecting contact paper to decorate the walls.

Don't expect Barbie to get a mansion, but a decent three-dimensional abode with easy access from

room to room — far more unique than those plastic palaces found in most toy aisles of the big box stores. You see, this year, we're thinking "outside the box."

Living in this age of computers, I expect the task of assembling the house to be a bit more creative than when I was a kid, but we'll see.

I'll let you know if it was a hit, or if we'll go back to playing with Big Jim's RV with Amazon Barbie.

Unfortunately, Big Jim is a dwarf when compared to Barbie — who looks like "Amazon woman" when placed next to him — and uses most of the spare leg space in Big Jim's RV.

ing construction today.

One year I asked Santa to bring Scotch tape — just so I could assemble the buildings together. And he obliged! When I was 11 years old, my brother-in-law Jerry bought us a girder-panel building set. We entered the world of building skyscrapers and Jerry immediately won a place in our hearts. We thought he was the best then-future brother-in-law ever. And the following January, we were blessed with

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Christ Child Society's Christmas gift program benefits many

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

SOUTH BEND — When Charles Dickens wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," he could have been writing about the world today. Blessings abide in new technologies and medicines that save countless lives. Sorrow exists in struggles to meet bills, illness and loss. But despite this coexistence, the warmth of human kindness can often melt the coldness of distress.

It was on a cold and snowy day in South Bend when two families that had never met shared their joys and challenges together. On Dec. 13, Joan, a member of the South Bend Christ Child Society, her daughters and their families, arrived with wrapped presents to give to Crystal and her six children for the society's annual Christmas gift program.

Originally called "Adopt a Family," the program first began in 1951, according to Vicky, Christmas gift chairman for Christ Child Society. Forty volunteers are adopting families this year; some adopting multiple families, for a total of 45 families. Christmas Gift Project volunteers purchase, wrap and deliver gifts to their assigned family prior to Christmas.

"This year, we have strengthened our collaboration with the

St. Vincent de Paul Society and are delivering food baskets, which are 25-30 pounds of non-perishable food items, provided by St. Vincent's to each family eligible for adoption," says Vicky.

Joan has been active in the Christmas gift program for the past 43 years. "There were some years when we had so much going on that I said I'm not going to sign up this year and my husband Ed said, 'Oh, yes, you are!'" Joan exclaims.

When asked how large a family she would like to adopt, Joan always wanted a family with four



Joan embraces Davyion.



PHOTOS BY KAREN CLIFFORD

Crystal's family is shown in this photo.

children, the same as the number of children in her family. Joan would give each of her children the name of a child from the adopting family and tell them to select three toys for each child.

"They would pick out all of their favorites. My son loved Legos and would get them as a gift," Joan reminisces.

In addition to toys and this year's food basket, Joan's family supplements the gifts with warm clothing, such as sweat pants, hats, mittens and underwear. It has also been a tradition for her family to bring candy canes and

cookies.

Joan remembers one year when she smelled cookies baking while delivering gifts to a family's home. The family receiving the gifts told Joan the cookies were for her family. Joan's first instinct was to let the family keep the cookies for themselves. But her husband interceded and thanked the family for their generosity. When Joan and her husband Ed got in the car he told her, "The cookies were all they could give you, you can't say no." The kids ate the cookies on their way home and Joan never forgot her

husband's words, or the kindness of the adopted family.

In recent years, Joan, her husband, daughters and grandchildren have asked to adopt a large family. Mary, one of Joan's daughters, remarks on the impact of the program. "I have been participating in the Christ Child Christmas Gift Program since I was very young. It is something I do because I feel it is important to give back to my community and for the love of the children." Mary adds, "To see their faces light up when we take the gifts to them is a gift to me. My husband and I take our children with us to deliver the gifts to teach them the importance of giving back."

For Crystal, a teacher's aide in the South Bend school system, this past year has presented several challenges. As the mother of six children, three boys and three girls, Crystal has struggled with child care issues, but is fortunate to have her mother to care of her 5-year-old twins while she is working. Last July, Crystal had a house fire that resulted in damage to the second floor of her home and costly repairs.

Despite the challenges of the last year, Crystal and her family look forward to the next year. Two of Crystal's sons hope to become more involved in Monroe Elementary sports programs. Damezi, 9, wants to play basketball and Davyion, 6, wants to become involved in wrestling. Crystal eagerly anticipates getting together with her extended family over the holidays and is grateful for the gifts that the Christmas program offers her children.

As chair of the Christmas gift program Vicky sums up the impact of giving of one's self to others. "The Christ Child truly is the 'reason for the season,' as they say. I see of no better way to honor our mission than by sharing our time, talent and treasures with those struggling families living in our midst."

Editor's note: Due to confidentiality, only first names were used in this article.

Christmas TV Mass Specials



FORT WAYNE

Christmas Eve

Midnight Mass live from the
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WISE-TV 33

Celebrant: Bishop John D'Arcy

Christmas Morning: Live 10:30-11:00 a.m.
WISE-TV 33

Celebrant: Bishop John D'Arcy

SOUTH BEND

Christmas Day

6:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

WNDU-TV 16

Mass taped from Sisters of Perpetual
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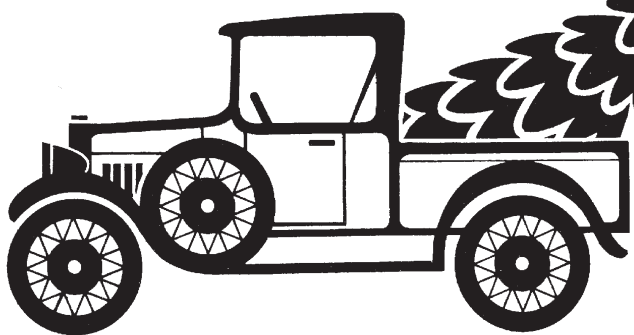


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Marian choirs sing 'Sounds of the Season'

MISHAWAKA — "Sounds of the Season," directed by Beth Crowder and her student assistant senior David Brennan, was performed by the Marian High School chamber and show choirs Dec. 12 and 14.

The combined Show Choir and Chamber Choir opened with the song "One Candle," as various singers' candles were lit in unison at designated times.

The chamber choir entertained with "The First Noel/Pachabel's Canon," "Shepherd's Joy," "Silver Bells," "Sleigh Ride" and "While You Were Sleeping."

The Show Choir performers opened the second half with "Twelve Groovy Days of Christmas," which particularly delighted audience members familiar with the 1970s.

The men performed a few numbers then joined the young ladies in the closing sequence.

For National Guard couples, faith is the key

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

FORT WAYNE — True love knows no boundaries for the wives of Army National Guard soldiers deployed overseas.

Two local Catholic couples, the Hilgers and the Tippmanns, have found that faith in God is key to getting through challenging times.

Paul Hilger and Joe Tippmann were among several hundred local soldiers in the 293rd infantry bound for Iraq. Hilger and Tippmann returned alive and well Nov. 25 to their spouses and families.

The couples shared their stories of faith, love and loyalty to country.



Paul and Kaitlin Hilger

PROVIDED BY THE HILGER FAMILY



PROVIDED BY THE TIPPANN FAMILY

Joe and Heather Tippmann are shown with their children Cody, Ava and Joe Jr.

Kaitlin (Cox) Hilger, 23, and Paul Hilger, 30, were engaged only six days when Paul found out he was to be deployed a second time to Iraq. They had talked about getting married in March of 2008, but decided to push it up due to Paul's active duty. The couple was married in November 2007, and Paul left in December for training in Georgia.

Soon the newlyweds were thousands of miles away; however, they maintained contact through letters, phone calls and e-mails.

As Kaitlin said, it was "nerve wrecking" not to hear from her husband regularly, but yet she was "spoiled by technology" with the advantage of the Internet.

But they both agree it's faith that has sustained their relationship.

"It helped me a lot more than I thought," Kaitlin said. "I'm closer to God and prayed more than I ever have."

Kaitlin added talking to God daily helped her overcome her feeling of helplessness.

On Paul's end, it was making an effort to attend Mass regularly that helped him through these trying times.

"Praying is a large part," he said.

Additionally, the Hilgers agree staying close to friends and family was key to sustaining their marriage.

"Just try to maintain a normal life," Kaitlin advises other women in her position.

Paul's deployment meant Kaitlin had to make some major decisions about the household.

Perhaps the most critical was buying a house in Paul's absence.

"He trusted me because I mostly picked it out on my own," she said.

Now that Paul is back, they are enjoying some much-needed time together. A cruise is planned for January. Meanwhile, Paul has returned to his civilian work at Glenbrook Dodge as a mechanic.

And there is talk of starting a family.

More than anything, Paul said it's genuine support for the cause and the troops that kept him going.

"It's nice to hear that (civilians) appreciate you, but you must support the troops and the war," he said.

It was an equally emotional time for the Tippmann family: Heather, 23; Joe, 30; Ava, 3; Joseph Jr., 2 and Cody, 4 months.

Heather found out she was pregnant with her third child the same day her husband Joe, was informed of his deployment.

"When I first found out, I couldn't even begin to fathom how I would live day to day through a yearlong deployment without him by my side," Heather said in an e-mail interview.

Many women might feel helpless in this situation, but Heather maintained her steadfast faith.

"It was a very emotional time for the entire family, and we remained hopeful (Joe) could be home for the delivery, Heather reflected. "Knowing the unlikelihood of that happening, we prayed for a healthy baby and for a quick return for Joe. We were so blessed that he was actually able to get leave for Cody's birth on Aug. 7."

In hindsight, Heather said Joe's deployment was a part of divine intervention.

"We knew God had a plan for us, and it was very hard to understand at that time," she said. "It allowed me to find a deeper meaning to sharing a soul with my spouse. Through many prayers, tears, and ultimately leaving it in God's hands, I've learned that even though he is not physically around, he will always be a part of me and our children."

Echoing Kaitlin's comments, Heather said the comfort of loved ones was vital to maintaining a positive mindset. Though, ultimately, the situation was in God's hands and she knew she wasn't alone.

"I think in a situation like this, it brought our family closer and has allowed our children to grow more compassion for one another," she said.

And their children are amazing in their own right, she said.

"I remember when Joe returned to Iraq after leave, I was really having a hard time with it and Ava said to me, 'Don't worry, Mommy, Daddy wants us to keep our happy face on,'" Heather recalled. "Behind her own tears, she was eager to please her daddy and listen to his last words to her before boarding the plane. Our children's strength never ceases to amaze me. At such a young age, they have a faith of knowing everything will be fine."

Unfortunately there are many other women in Heather and Kaitlin's shoes. But, Heather believes there is a bright side to the situation.

"It may be hard to understand the purpose, but deployment can truly be a blessing in disguise," she said. "Joe and I have an even deeper relationship after enduring the hardships this past year. But, we have a deeper appreciation and respect for each other and our children that many will never experience."

Joe's contract with the Army National Guard expires at the end of 2009, so it is unlikely he will be deployed again. As for their future, Heather said she is content with "just enjoying the presence of each other one day at a time."

There are many service members that don't return and she will never take for granted that he was able to come home safely, she noted.

"We are so incredibly blessed to hold him again."

Christmas Mass Schedule
 Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, 2008
 "Shepherd's Mass" - 4:00 pm
 Vigil Mass - 6:00 pm
 Sacred Concert - 11:30 pm
 Midnight Mass - 12:00 am

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 2008
 Christmas Day Mass - 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Mary, Mother of God
 New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31, 2008
 4:00 pm Vigil Mass
 New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2009
 9:00 am & 11:00 am

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Holy Cross and
 St. Stanislaus Parish
 Holiday Schedule

Christmas Eve - December 24

4:00 pm - Holy Cross Church (Family Mass)

5:00 pm - St. Stanislaus Church

Midnight Mass 12:00 am - Holy Cross Church



Christmas Day - December 25

9:30 am - St. Stanislaus 11:00 am - Holy Cross

Mary, Mother of God Vigil (New Year's Eve)

5:30 pm - Holy Cross Church

Mary, Mother of God - January 1, 2009

9:30 am - St. Stanislaus Church



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CHRISTMAS MASSES

December 24, 4:00 p.m. with Children's Choir

6:30 p.m. with Contemporary Choir

12:00 a.m. Midnight with Adult Choir

December 25: 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.

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Christmas Eve Masses:

5:00 PM (Children's Mass)

Midnight Mass

(Music begins at 11:15 PM)

Christmas Morning Masses

8:00 & 11:30 AM

Saturday, December 27 - 5:00 PM

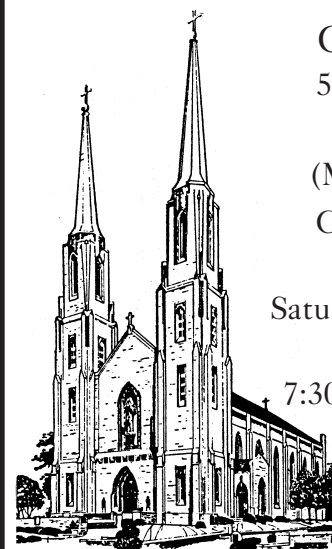
Sunday, December 28

7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM 5:00 PM

New Year's Eve 5:00 PM

New Year's Day

9:00 AM and 11:00 AM



Visit the Cathedral during this Season of Grace.

EDITORIAL

Smile and say, 'Merry Christmas'

As Christmas draws near, the secular and commercial aspects of the holiday surround us. Especially this year, with the country's economy in difficulty, we may be caught up in that commercial spirit and be tempted to dwell on what we don't have.

Rather than looking on a tight budget as a negative, however, try considering it as an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, which Pope Benedict cited in his Angelus message on the second Sunday of Advent.

The pope emphasized the hopeful messages in the Advent readings and noted that Christ's birth, death and resurrection made possible "the passage from the kingdom of evil to the kingdom of God, from the domination of sin and death to that of love and life." For our part, the pope said, we must commit ourselves to building God's kingdom of justice and peace.

Appropriately, it is our commitment to building God's kingdom that ultimately leads to our own happiness, recent studies have confirmed. We shouldn't be surprised by the study that found that happiness is contagious, and just smiling at another person — even a total stranger — increases that person's happiness. And we shouldn't be surprised to learn that giving our time, talent and treasure to others makes us happier ourselves. In turn, happy people are more inclined to act morally, which results in a more just and peaceful society.

This is very much the same message in one of the most popular Christmas movies of all time: Frank Capra's 1946 classic, "It's a Wonderful Life," which in drama form is playing in our diocese this month at Amish Acres in Nappanee.

In that movie and play, the main character, George Bailey, is contemplating suicide at Christmastime because of his financial difficulties. But just as he's about to jump from a bridge into the river, he sees a man struggling in the icy river. George forgets about himself and jumps in to save the man. This act also saves George's own life, for he discovers that the half-drowned man is an angel sent by God to help George realize that life is worth living.

The angel helps George rediscover that one's value is not measured by how much money you have made, or how big your house is, or how many countries you have visited, or how many important people you know. Rather, George comes to realize that he has led a noble and successful life simply by being an honest and honorable person day in and day out, and by helping other people at every opportunity. By reviewing his life with the angel, George also is made aware of how important the smallest act of kindness and self-giving can be in the greater scheme of things.

When a grateful George returns to his humble home after his near-death experience, he finds the true treasures of his life: family and friends who love and support him for who he is and for what he has done for others, not for what he has.

So, if you're tempted to feel sorry for yourself or your family this Christmas because of what you don't have, instead think of all that you do have and how you can use your gifts and talents to help others. Regardless of your financial situation, try reevaluating how Christmas is celebrated in your home and consider starting some new, meaningful traditions that are less centered on gifts and more centered on celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Above all, try to focus on your good fortune in having received the most wondrous and valuable gift ever given, described this way in Luke's Christmas Gospel:

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord."

A week off

Today's Catholic will not publish Dec. 28, but we will be back Jan. 4, 2009, with a bit of a new front page design to accommodate some postal labeling requirements.

From the staff of *Today's Catholic*, we wish all of you a blessed Christmas and new year. And we thank you for the honor of allowing us into your home 47 times each year to bring you the events and happenings of our diocese and church.

Today's Catholic editorial board consists of Ann Carey, Don Clemmer, Fred and Lisa Everett, Father Mark Gurtner, Father Michael Heintz, Tim Johnson and Vince LaBarbera.

COMMENTARY

TODAY'S CATHOLIC welcomes letters from readers. All letters must be signed and include a phone number and address for verification. Today's Catholic reserves the right to edit for clarity and length. Address letters to: Today's Catholic • P.O. Box 11169 • Fort Wayne, IN • 46856-1169 or e-mail to: editor@fw.diocesefwsb.org

An unforgettable Christmas in 1934

Our family will never forget Christmas in 1934 during the Great Depression.

Dad worked at Studebaker Plant assembling cars. During the Depression when cars just weren't selling, plant production was greatly reduced. Some weeks they got to work two or three days, and there were times when they were idled the entire week. There weren't very many full five-day work weeks.

In 1934, there were eight children in our family and another one was on the way. The children ranged in age from 17 to 3. I was 10 years old. Every day became a struggle to survive. The oldest boys had various ways of earning money: paper routes, catching crickets, catalpa worms, night crawlers to be sold for fish bait and working on the big farms west of town weeding peppermint and vegetable fields.

We lived near the railroad tracks. Whenever they were replacing rail ties, the older boys would pick up the discarded ties. We would cut them up for fuel to heat the house. That greatly reduced our coal bills. We also had a large vegetable garden and did a lot of canning.

Just before Christmas in 1934 mother would be telling us not to expect any presents or festive foods, like ham, sausage, candy, nuts, oranges, or even a Christmas tree.

The Christmas Eve meal in the Polish home is very traditional and highlighted with the sharing of the "oplatek," the Christmas wafer. Our meal was very sparse but we did have the oplatek. However, the usual Christmas joy was absent as we ate.

After the meal as we were clearing the table, there was a loud pounding on our front door. When we opened the door no one was there. But we did see some boxes by the door, filled to the top with packages. We brought them inside and the little ones were excited and screaming with joy. "Santa Claus was here!"

The boxes contained food, meat, candy, nuts and fruit. There were personal gifts for everyone. I received a pair of brand new brown cloth gloves. I never had anything brand new before, just hand-me-downs. I was thrilled with my first pair of gloves!

Where did all of this come from? We didn't know. Mom thought it probably came from the St. Adalbert Goodwill Society. Its members were ladies from the parish who assisted needy families.

When we settled down from all the excitement, mother explained to us that God was looking out after us.

In the spirit of Christmas some benefactors brought the reality of God's goodness into our midst. Oh, how we felt blessed. We knew that the infant Jesus had his arms

wrapped around us.

Whatever hardships we had to undergo from that day on, we put our trust and hope in God's mercy, and knew that his presence was with us.

Christmas Eve of 1934 started out as a sad day, but ended as an extremely joyful day.

Louis A. Ciesielski
South Bend

The peace that God desires for us

We wonder why there are so many problems in the world. Look around. When we're exposed to lies often enough, and big enough, we start calling evil good, and we call good evil. There are so many truths being called lies, and so many lies being called truths. So many "rights" are being invented that have never existed or ever will. And we pretend that so many preexisting, fundamental, God-given rights have never existed. We wind up tolerating what we shouldn't and being intolerant of what we should embrace for the good of our souls.

So, for all of us who choose to celebrate Christmas the way our Lord and Savior wants us to celebrate it: Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King, and let every heart prepare him room. That is the only way to the peace that God desires for us.

Anthony J. Stein
South Bend

What if there were no tomorrows?

As a member of the Knights of Columbus, a thought popped into my head wondering where I am with my faith if there were no tomorrows. Did I, as a member of the Knights of Columbus, honor my promise to defend the faith and the moral teachings of the church; vote for a leadership that protects life in every circumstance, give blood to save a life or feed the hungry? If tomorrow didn't come could I look God in the face with love or would it be with fear? That's pretty heady stuff.

What does that have to do with faith you ask? We Knights of Columbus serve our fellow man in every way possible because we believe we are called to serve our God. Because of God's grace, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and the essential calling to reach out to others in need. We are asked to evangelize all men through our actions and prayer. We are asked to form a council in every parish where possible and ask every Catholic gentleman to join our ranks. Our faith in our God drives us to love our fellow man through our actions.

The Indiana Knights of



THE INDIANA KNIGHTS

BY ROBERT HARTENSTEIN

Columbus has been asked by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson to "recommit to growth in holiness and actively participate in the church's mission." Our society is broken in its moral fabric and if there were no tomorrows, where would it be? Would we as Knights have done all that we could to preserve this world we live in with charity, unity and fraternity?

As the new year rapidly approaches, Indiana Knights must be prepared to say yes to our God in protecting our church from the constant assault from our secular society that is determined to destroy all the values we hold so dear.

On the brighter side of life, through prayer and trust in our God, if there were no tomorrows, we Knights of Columbus can be assured a loving meeting with God our Father. Through our charity with others, unity

and fraternity with our fellow Knights, we strengthen who we are and what we stand for.

As the year 2009 approaches, we must welcome new opportunities to serve others as our Lord served us and be resolute in our faith.

Indiana State Deputy Stephan Ziemba set "A call to serve" as his slogan during his term of office. All Indiana Knights are called to step forward and make a difference in the life of another through service. The real question is, if there were no tomorrows did we serve with love? Did my faith carry this day?

Robert Hartenstein is the director of communications for the Indiana Knights of Columbus.

Surviving the holidays

Grieving the loss of a loved one is never an easy task. And the journey may become even more daunting as the holidays approach, with the anticipation of seasonal celebrations without a loved one almost paralyzing to some.

I faced my first Christmas without my husband, who brought cheer in a big way to every holiday, with a heavy heart and a cascade of emotions. As I walked numbly through the motions of established holiday traditions, my two young daughters were just as confused as I. We stumbled through the gatherings, crying all the way, that first year. And I am not ashamed to admit that I was relieved when the often bemoaned January doldrums once again took over our days.

The second holiday season found me more prepared as I began to understand my grief and reestablish my family as "three." Many of our traditions and gatherings continued to bring us a sense of the season, however, I soon learned that we had the ability — and the need — to establish new traditions that would work for us.

The girls and I began to take quiet times away from the hustle-bustle of Christmas to read or cry

or just remember their father. The expression of our shared grief lifted the burden just a bit.

Our favorite holiday tradition even now, 18 years later, is to light a candle for Trent and watch home videos of his antics. We connect with him in our laughter and our gratitude.

We gave ourselves permission to do what we needed to do to survive. And we tried to surround ourselves with those who understood our need to remember and just "be."

For those who are newly bereaved and are facing the deep longing of your loss, I'd like to share a few tips for holiday survival that I have learned along my journey of grief:

- **Plan ahead.** Be aware of the feelings, from reluctance to glee, that may rise up and how you and others will respond. Have an action plan to take care of yourself.

- **Be gentle with yourself.** Give yourself permission to take a break from the activities and festivities. Find a quiet place to just "be." Rest your body periodically to maintain energy levels.

- **Give yourself and others permission to talk about your loved one.** Family and friends may be reluc-

HOPE IN THE MOURNING

KAY COZAD

tant to speak about your loss, but when you break the ice, they will most likely join in. If some choose not to, remember, each grief journey is unique and worthy of honoring.

- **Don't feel obligated to attend any function you are uncomfortable with.** However, be mindful to resist isolating yourself during this special time of celebrating family and friends.

- **Following regular traditions may be painful without your loved one.** It's okay to eliminate any activities for a time and to establish a new tradition or two, if you like.

- **Allow yourself to feel all the feelings, from sorrow to joy, that come with anticipating a holiday.** Find healthy ways to express them.

- **As you recognize your feelings**

HOPE, PAGE 16

Jesus' coming fulfills God's promises



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

4th Sunday of Advent Lk 1:26-38

The first reading for this weekend is from the Second Book of Samuel. Once the two Books of Samuel were a single volume. Translations and editions over the centuries divided this one volume into two.

David is the principal figure in these books. The ancient Hebrews looked upon David much more than as a king. Beyond all else, he was God's chosen representative, given the kingship so that laws and circumstances might provide an atmosphere in which the people more fervently would follow God and be loyal to the Covenant.

For this weekend's second reading, the church offers us a reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Scholars unanimously say that Paul of Tarsus indeed authored this epistle, and that this epistle was his masterpiece. For this reason, it appears first in sequence among the 14 epistles attributed to Paul, placed in Bibles immediately following the Acts of the Apostles.

As indicated by its title, Paul sent this epistle, or letter, to the Christian population of Rome. In the first century A.D., Rome was the center of the Mediterranean world in every respect, political,

economic and cultural. Also, it was the largest city in the Roman Empire. Not surprisingly, Rome, the great imperial capital, had within its borders a great array of ideas and religions, Christianity among them.

In this weekend's reading, as often elsewhere, Paul asserts his own vocation as an apostle. His vocation from God came so that "all the Gentiles" might believe in, and obey, God, "who alone is wise."

For the final reading this weekend, the church proclaims a beautiful part of St. Luke's Gospel, of Luke's infancy narrative. It is the story of the annunciation, the event when Gabriel, the angel, came into the presence of Mary, a young Jewish woman, in Nazareth in Galilee, to inform her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Redeemer.

The reading abounds with meaning. Luke makes clear that Mary was a virgin, and that the conception of the Redeemer would not be the result of any human relationship. Behind this fact is the reality that God, as creator and the provider of order to the universe, can do anything. He is almighty. The Redeemer will be the Son of God. He will be David's successor.

The Redeemer's coming will fulfill God's promises, spoken by the prophets all through the ages, to bring life and salvation to the people. The birth of this Redeemer will be the ultimate satisfaction of the ancient Covenant.

Vital to the message of the story is Mary's response. "I am the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

Reflection

In each of these readings,

speaking through the Scriptures, the church makes a very important point. God reaches out to us. This outreach is not vague or impossible to see. Indeed, it is in the persons of individuals with whom we can relate, David, Paul and Jesus.

The outreach occurs in the face of our own inadequacy and limitations, and also in the fact that God is almighty. However, God's supreme power over all creation is not the most consoling point here. Rather, the most reassuring factor is that God's great love for us prompts the dispatch of teachers such as David, Paul and Jesus, to guide us to union with God and therefore to peace in our hearts and life in eternity.

The church approaches Christmas with a message of love. God loves us. He does not leave us helpless in our own powerlessness. He reaches to us to draw us to the divine presence itself.

It now is up to us to respond. Do we accept God? Or, do we turn God away? It is that simple.

READINGS

Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

Monday: 1 Sm 1:24-28 (Ps) 1 Sm 2:1, 4-7, 8a-d Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-5, 27-29 Lk 1:67-79

Thursday: Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18

Friday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21 Mt 10:17-22

Saturday: 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:2-8

CATEQUIZ'EM

By Dominic Camplisson

Many regions of the U.S. are covered in snow at this time of year, even in the desert states, but we do not associate snow with the Holy Land. As this quiz will show, the Israelites were actually very familiar with snow.

1. Proverbs 26 tell us that this is like snow in summer:

- a. Cheese cooked with meat
- b. Honor for a fool
- c. Make up on a Jewess

2. Although Joshua 3 does not mention the cause, historians believe snow melt is the reason that

- a. the river Jordan overflowed its banks during the entire season of the harvest.
- b. Moses was able to float to safety in a reed basket.
- c. the waters of the Dead Sea were pure and cool.

3. In Job 6, Job compares his brethren to people covered in ice and snow. What does he mean?

- a. They are pure as snow and cool as ice.
- b. They melt away when he needs them.
- c. They are white as opposed to the tanned Edomites.

4. In Job 9, Job discusses using snow for this purpose:

- a. Skiing away from his enemies
- b. Preserving food
- c. Washing himself

5. Isaiah 1 contrasts the purity of white snow with this color caused by sin

- a. purple
- b. red
- c. puce

6. The aptly named book of Lamentations in chapter 4 decries how the princes of the Israelites were once brighter than snow but have become

- a. blacker than soot
- b. redder than purple (a shellfish dye)
- c. yellower than saffron

7. On an optimistic note, Isaiah 55 says the word of the Lord is like snow because both

- a. dazzle the eyes.
- b. provide sustenance (snow watering the earth).
- c. are white and symbolically pure.

8. Proverbs 31 lists the attributes of a good wife. Amongst them are that she does not fear that snow will harm her household; because she has taken this precaution:

- a. She has lit fires inside each tent.
- b. She has doubly clothed her household.
- c. She has stored stones heated by the sun all day, to radiate heat all night.

9. Psalm 51 is a penitential prayer of David who wants to be washed "whiter than snow." With whom had he sinned?

- a. Rebecca
- b. Rachel
- c. Bathsheba

10. According to Matthew 28, who did the women meet at the tomb of Jesus, "his clothing was white as snow."

- a. the fuller or dyer for Herod
- b. an angel
- c. the risen Lord

11. The rather dramatic term "snow white Leper" as used in numbers 12 probably refers to

- a. a snow leopard
- b. Snow White and the seven Moabites
- c. a temporary and not serious skin disease

12. Similarly in Exodus 4, this man's hands were turned temporarily white as snow so God could demonstrate his power to make anything happen:

- a. Moses
- b. Job
- c. Paul

13. According to Daniel 3, Jewish youths praised the Lord in these chilly terms, "Ice and snow, bless the Lord ... " but from this decidedly hot location

- a. the Negev Desert
- b. the palace of the sun disc (Aten) of Akhenaton
- c. inside a furnace

14. Sirach 43 includes this dramatic description of snow:

- a. Like swarms of locusts, its shining whiteness blinds the eyes,
- b. Like salt in the wounds, it afflicts the Egyptians
- c. Like the white cloak of the reaper, it cuts down the sinful

15. In Revelation 1 this person is described as having white hair, not the commonest image we have of him:

- a. The Lamb (Christ)
- b. the pope
- c. Nero

ANSWERS:

- 1.b, 2.a, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b, 6.a, 7.b, 8.b, 9.c, 10.b, 11.c, 12.a, 13.c, 14.a, 15.a

Madonna of hope

Toward the end of his encyclical "Saved in Hope," Pope Benedict XVI turns his and our attention to Mary. Using the title Star of the Sea, he notes how life is a journey in which we need stars to indicate the route we should take. He then turns his attention to Mary — one who shines "with his light and so guides us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her 'yes,' she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us." — cf. Jn 1: 14.

And he adds a personal address to the virgin, which I believe we must keep in mind. "When you hastened with holy joy across the mountains of Judea to see your cousin Elizabeth, you became the image of the church to come, which carries the hope of the world in her womb across the mountains of history."

The French poet Charles Peguy, whose life was a struggle, penned, "The Portal of the Mystery of Hope." He sees hope as central to our spiritual strivings. He believes

that in many ways hope quietly carries faith and love to their true fulfillment. A few of his insights should be noted:

"Faith sees only what is, but she (hope), she sees what will be.

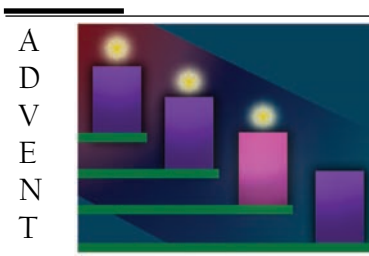
Charity loves only what is, but she, she loves what will be. Faith sees what is in time and in eternity.

Hope sees what will be in time and for eternity."

In this broad context, I believe we should conclude our Advent meditations on his note of hope — and how we should be fostering this hope within our own lives.

Mary was conscious of the life within her — a life which she knew would bring about a radical transformation in the world. It was her conscious concentration on the life that compelled her to become an icon of hope.

The mystery and the joy of the Christmas season is that this same life can and is born again and again within us. The dynamics remain constant and simple. But they bear repeating. We begin by listening to the word of God; then we pray for the grace to nourish that Word within us; finally, we



BY MSGR. THOMAS McDONNELL

present Christ to the world through our acts of compassion, love, forgiveness, etc. And like Mary, we must learn to look at the Life within — at the one who is God with us and who attaches himself to us.

There is a striking image in the Italian artist Botticelli's "Madonna of the Magnificat." Mary is depicted before an open book and an inkwell, penning her prayer. The right hand of the infant Jesus covers her hand as she finishes her prayer of praise — a prayer in which she envisions "What will be in time."

"He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones, but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich he has sent empty away ..."

Defending human dignity

Before tackling "Dignitas Personae" ("The Dignity of a Person"), the recent instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on contemporary bioethical questions, I'd suggest rereading the first chapter of Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World." Huxley was no great shakes as a stylist, but his depiction of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre is a strikingly prescient, blood-chilling glance into a future in which manufacture and manipulation have replaced begetting and nurture at the beginnings of human life. It's remarkable enough that Huxley imagined all this a generation before the unraveling of the DNA double-helix launched the genetic revolution; what's even more striking is that Huxley's dystopia is, in fact, upon us.

Be scared. Be very scared. For the question is no longer whether we are on a slippery slope, careening downward toward a world of machine-tooled and stunted humanity — a world in which love is displaced by technique and longing by social planning. We're on the slope, all right, and the question is whether the brakes can be applied soon enough. "Dignitas Personae" is a courageous effort to alert us to the present danger, to remind us of the dignity that is inherent in every human life from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death, and to suggest how that dignity is threatened by the false use of our new genetic knowledge, even in good causes.

Thanks to the prejudices of the mass media and the communications incapacities of the church, Catholic teaching on sexual love and human reproduction is often

taken to be a string of prohibitions, in which aloof and naysaying celibate clergy presume to instruct lay men and women on their moral responsibilities. The truth of that matter, however, is that every "no" in the church's understanding of the moral life is premised on a "yes." In the first millennium of Christian moral theology, morality was primarily understood as a means to happiness, and the Beatitudes were the magna carta of the Christian moral life; Christians didn't do certain things, not because they were arbitrarily forbidden, but because they didn't make for our happiness and flourishing.

The church has begun to recover that positive, beatitude-centered understanding of the moral life, thanks to the work of great moral theologians like the recently deceased Father Servais Pinckaers, OP, and the magisterium of Pope John Paul II. Because of this work, the church of the 21st century can appeal to all men and women of good will on the basis of questions that are truly universal in scope: "What makes for human happiness?" "What makes for genuine human flourishing?" Explicitly or implicitly, alone or with others, everyone asks those questions. Beginning there, we can have a real conversation about what is good and what is evil, what is noble and what is base, what is life-affirming and what is life-denying.

In his great encyclical on Christian mission, "Redemptoris Missio," John Paul II wrote that "The church proposes; she imposes nothing." In a cultural climate like our own — in which the question "Will it work?" usually trumps the question "Is it right?" — the Catholic proposals contained in "Dignitas Personae"



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

GEORGE WEIGEL

are inevitably countercultural. It is countercultural to affirm medical technologies and procedures that assist infertile couples in conceiving through natural means, while proposing that IVF (in vitro fertilization) poses grave moral problems. It is countercultural to embrace and celebrate the possibilities for healing contained in the new genetics, while proposing that embryo-destructive stem-cell research is a grave moral evil. It is countercultural to bring the tools of moral reason to bear on heart-rending issues which most of our fellow citizens believe can be resolved emotively and technologically, on the basis of compassion wedded to technique. So, yes, "Dignitas Personae" is countercultural. But it is countercultural precisely in order to lift up, defend, and promote the dignity of the human person, which is at risk when human life becomes commodified.

Knowledge must be complemented by wisdom — moral wisdom — if humanity is to avoid Huxley's dystopia. Reminding us of that, "Dignitas Personae" does a great, necessary and compassionate service.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

In her visionary words, Mary is describing the beginnings of the kingdom of God — a kingdom of justice, love and peace. As we know, we are a long way from achieving this kingdom. But her vision and in our image, Christ's blessing of her sentiments compels us to work for this goal.

In my imaginary journey with Mary toward Bethlehem, two incidents occurred that might explain why we have not made better progress toward realizing God's earthly desire. The first would lead us to the inn keeper who failed to offer hospitality. Such was a sacred tradition in Biblical times. For whatever reason, perhaps busyness, he did not welcome Mary and Joseph into his house and into his heart. From him we learn that we must never fail to reach out in hospitality to those who are in

need. For ourselves, they represent Christ in disguise, "as long as you did it to the least. ..."

Secondly, in quiet meditation, we might pause before the traditional crèche scene. The image of the baby is always appealing. It enfleshes so much; innocence, joy, etc. Then we realize that the child is utterly dependent. And the truth is that Christ still remains dependent upon us to bring his good news to our world.

Msgr. Thomas McDonnell is a retired priest from the Archdiocese of Boston. He has dedicated his life to the urban poor and disabled. A cancer survivor, he is the author of "Walking in the Dark Valley: When Cancer is a Constant Companion."

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

By Patricia Kasten

Gospel for December 21, 2008

Luke 1:26-38

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B, the visit by the angel to Mary of Nazareth. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

ANGEL	GABRIEL	GALILEE
NAZARETH	VIRGIN	JOSEPH
MARY	PONDERED	FAVOR
BEAR A SON	GREAT	MOST HIGH
JACOB	KINGDOM	NO END
POWER	THE CHILD	BORN
HOLY	ELIZABETH	IMPOSSIBLE

ANGEL WORDS

H G I H T S O M A L L E
P A A N G E L W K J O V
E B E L I Z A B E T H I
S R D L I H C E H T O R
O I J H B L K T A E R G
J E O J O I E A N F E I
K L N A N R S E J R W N
Y T B E A R A S O N O G
R T X Z O F A V O R P B
A J A C O B G E O P G H
M N M O D G N I K F M A
E D P O N D E R E D X I

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HOPE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and work to express them, consider seeking support from others. Talk with your family and friends or join a support group and ask for what you need.

- Give yourself permission to have fun during the holidays even in your grief. Connect with your loved one through your joy.

- Find a way to remember your loved one in a special way for the holidays. Light a candle at a family gathering, make a special ornament or photo album, say a prayer or invite others to tell stories. Your loved one can be forever part of your holiday experience, just in a different way.

- Discover what you are truly

grateful for. Write your blessings down or tell a special friend or family member. Acknowledging gratitude, especially for your loved one, warms the heart.

Sandy Goodman, author of "Love Never Dies: A Mother's Journey from Loss to Love," wrote this wish for Christmas, "... My wish for you is this: That you find a quiet moment during the sometimes magical but often horrendous season upon us and relax. ... Close your eyes and envision your friend, child, parent, sibling, spouse, grandparent or partner. ... That you accept that dead doesn't mean 'gone.'" I couldn't have said it better myself.

Kay Cozad is a certified grief educator and writer for *Today's Catholic* newspaper.

Sports

COACH DONLEY HONORED University of Saint Francis football coach Kevin Donley has been named a coach of the year in the NAIA, Region 2, by the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA). The AFCA recognizes five regional Coach of the Year winners in each of the Association's five divisions: Football Bowl Subdivision, Football Championship Subdivision, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III and NAIA. This is Donley's first AFCA regional honor following his 30th year in coaching. He has guided USF to six unbeaten regular seasons in the last seven years.

St. John boys and girls take the gold in CYO basketball

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — In the second week of 2008-2009 Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) hoops action at St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, both boys' and girls' varsity groups from St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, were victorious in Gold League competition.

In a non-conference matchup,

the eighth-grade Lady Cardinals from St. Charles downed St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, but the boys from Hessen Cassel topped Huntington in a Blue League game.

In her first role as a varsity coach, Amy



Knapke's goal is to build a program for the Squires of St.

Joseph-Hessen Cassel who have been without a seventh-and-eighth-grade team for the past several seasons.

With just three eighth graders and three seventh graders on the roster,

Knapke brought up three sixth graders to list a total of nine players.

"Although we are a young team and lack experience at the varsity level, we hope to be competitive in the Blue League this season," explained Knapke.

Knapke, who has directed a successful junior varsity program, feels her team's quickness and speed will benefit the efforts of the Squires. Maria Parsenow and Tracy Sweeney are assisting Knapke in her rookie season.

On the boys' side, Jim Knapke may have lost four of his starters from a year ago, but a seasoned Wil Knapke, three eighth graders who practiced all season against last year's Blue League champions and 6-foot, 2-inch newcomer, Brian Teeters, are a strong lineup for St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel.

"This group really plays hard. We are a solid defensive team, have decent outside shooting and good ball handling," summarized Knapke. The Squires have opened the CYO season with a 2-0 start in conference play and finished a strong third place at the Queen of

Angels Thanksgiving Invitational.

Knapke feels they have a good shot at defending their feeder school title over Christmas break and his team has a goal of adding a 2009 CYO championship to the record books. Assisting with the uptempo game and man-to-man defense for the Squires are Jason Sweeney and Jim Bosler who serve as assistant coaches for Hessen Cassel.

Boys

St. John 40, St. Charles 33 — T. Straessle, 10 points; Williamson 10 points; Shank 10 points

St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel 57, Huntington 23 — Knapke 19 points; Pike 10 points

Girls

St. John 30, St. Joseph, Decatur 25 — A. Schultz 13 points; Hammock 18 points

St. Charles 39, Hessen Cassel 27 — Beckman 8 points; Gibson 17 points

Coaches: E-mail your scores and highlights to Michelle Castleman at mmcastleman@aol.com.

ICCL adds St. Pius X gym to basketball action

SOUTH BEND — In its second week of Inter-City Catholic League (ICCL) hardwood action Dec. 14, some boys basketball teams utilized a new venue, St. Pius X gymnasium in Granger.

In varsity games at Saint Joseph's High School, Christ the King beat Holy Family by a slim margin, 35-34. Christ the King was paced by Connor Edmonds with 17 points. Dylan Hensley tossed in 21 and Ryan Webbe 10 points for Holy Family.

Holy Cross had a slim win against Corpus Christi, 29-28. Holy Cross' Anthony Douglas scored 12 points in the win. Ray Kowalski had 17 points for Corpus Christi.

St. Joseph, South Bend, defeated St. Anthony, 34-32, with Tommy Favorite pacing the winners with 17 points. Bredan Mischler had 15 points for St. Anthony — all on three pointers.

Action at the new St. Pius X gym included a win by St. Jude over St. John the Baptist, 47-15. St. Jude's Neal Dowling tossed in 13 points.

Our Lady of Hungary defeated St. Michael, Plymouth, 32-27, with Tyran Otteridge leading the victors with 11 points. Davis Payne had 14 points for St. Michael's.

St. Joseph, Mishawaka, defeated Queen of Peace, 47-29. Michael Whitfield of St. Joseph's led all scorers with 22 points. Nick Johnson of Queen of Peace had 14 points.

In other games, St. Thomas, Elkhart, defeated St. Matthew, 29-22, and St. Pius defeated St. Monica, 28-19.

Varsity action returns to Marian High School and Saint Joseph's High School Dec. 21 before a Christmas holiday break in ICCL action on Dec. 28.

In the Boys Colors basketball action, Christ the King Blue beat Christ the King Gold, 33-23. The Gold's Giotto Irons had 11 points.

St. Joseph, South Bend, Blue defeated St. Joseph, Mishawaka, Green, 31-22. St. Joe's Blue team was led by Josh Kachmarik with 10 points in the win.

Brennan Krutsch of St. Pius X Green tossed in 12 points to lead his team for a win, 24-22, over Christ the King White.

In other games, St. Joseph, South Bend, Gold defeated St. Thomas Maroon, 28-21; and St. Pius X Gold beat St. Matthew Black, 42-16.

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'Doubt' should resonate with Catholic viewers

BY HARRY FORBES

NEW YORK (CNS) — The New York and London Pulitzer Prize-winning stage hit "Doubt" (Miramax) makes an equally engrossing movie experience, and one that — despite the reminder of a dark chapter in the church's recent history — should resonate with Catholic viewers.

The story is set in 1964 at a fictional Bronx parochial grammar school, St. Nicholas (modeled on the actual St. Anthony, whose exterior is used). Autocratic principal Sister Aloysius (Meryl Streep) comes to suspect a popular priest, Father Flynn (Philip Seymour

Hoffman), of impropriety with 12-year-old Donald, the school's first black student, a sensitive boy whom Father Flynn has treated compassionately.

Sister Aloysius, together with idealistic and kind young teacher Sister James (Amy Adams), sets out to confront him. Sister Aloysius has little proof, but rather a deep-seated conviction that she is right. When Sister James observes Father Flynn putting something in Donald's school locker, and smells alcohol on the altar boy's breath when he returns to the classroom after meeting with the priest, she suspects the worst, and gives Sister Aloysius the ammunition she needs.

Is he guilty or not? It's natural for viewers to side with the feisty, not unlikable Sister Aloysius. But things may not be what they so readily seem, and this is writer-director John Patrick Shanley's point.

Shanley has successfully adapted his drama, deftly recreating the Catholic milieu of the era through the small period details of the classrooms, the principal's office, the rectory, the convent, etc., soon to change after the Second Vatican Council and the reforms and upheaval of the civil rights era.

Shanley, who won an Oscar for the screenplay of "Moonstruck" and has not directed since 1990's "Joe Versus the Volcano," directs

here with a sure hand, with telling close-ups and revelatory silences. The pace never flags.

Cinematographer Roger Deakins uses the College of Mount Saint Vincent, founded by the Sisters of Charity (the order of nuns in the film), and other apt loca-

tions — many in the very neighborhood where Shanley grew up and set his story — to beautiful effect.

There are several subtle touches that illuminate the strongly hierarchical structure of the church in that period, as exemplified in the contrast between the high-spirited, clubby affability of the priests' dining table, and the austere formality of the sisters' meals. And how, when summoned to Sister Aloysius' office, Father Flynn assumes it's his right to appropriate her seat behind the desk, while the two sisters obsequiously serve him tea, even as they are planning their accusatory salvo.

Cherry Jones and Brian F. O'Byrne gave memorable performances on stage, but Streep and Hoffman are equally impressive. After a few seconds of adjusting to Streep's iconic face in her period black cape and bonnet, one completely accepts her in the role, Bronx accent and all, as she deftly balances the formidable side of this old-school nun — who even decries the use of ballpoint pens — with flashes of sardonic humor.

Hoffman is equally convincing, as his Father Flynn delivers impassioned sermons from his pulpit or

cheerfully bucks some of the old-school sternness to which Sister Aloysius still firmly adheres, and earning her enmity before she suspects him of anything worse. Their scenes together play like a fascinating chess match.

Adams is ideal as the novice teacher. Her character is the only one known to be directly inspired by an actual person: Shanley's first-grade teacher, Sister Margaret McEntee — a Sister of Charity who began religious life with the name Sister James. She served as a consultant on the film, which is dedicated to her.

Viola Davis is magnificent in her one big scene as the distraught mother of the putative victim who astonishes Sister Aloysius by her singularly unexpected reaction.

Though sexual misconduct is at the heart of the story, it is the balance between doubt which, as Shanley has said, "allows for growth and change" and premature certainty, which only leads to a "dead end" — that forms the principal thematic subtext. His metaphorical critique is directed not at the church but at those who insist on absolutes in society at large.

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MISC. HAPPENINGS

Victory Noll plans La Posada
Huntington — "La Posada: Who is Knocking at the Door?" will be at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21 in the Bishop Noll Memorial Chapel. No fee or registration is required. Call (260) 356-0628 for information.

Youth ministry plans Mass, dinner and talk by Cindy Black

New Haven — A youth Mass on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. at St. Louis Besancon Church will be followed by dinner and a teen level program on Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," a beautiful teaching on sexuality.

Blood drive announced

Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council #14299 St. Joseph the Worker will have an American Red Cross Blood Drive Sunday, Dec. 28, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Joseph School Cafeteria at the corner of Brooklyn and Hale Ave. Advance registration can be made at 1-800 GIVE LIFE or

the St. Joseph Parish Office (260) 432-5113 Ext. 323. Walk ins are welcome.

High school leadership retreat
New Haven — St. John the Baptist Parish youth ministry will offer "Joy for the Journey" a high school leadership retreat Jan. 16-18. Early registration is \$50 by Dec. 22. Call (260) 493-4553 ext. 308 for information.

Square dances planned

New Haven — St. Louis Academy HASA will have a square dance Saturday, Jan. 10, and Feb. 14, in St. Louis Besancon Hall. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. with dancing from 8-11 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and include two beer tickets and snacks.

Little Flower Holy Hour

Fort Wayne — Father Philip Schneider, OFM, Conv. will celebrate the holy hour at MacDougal Chapel Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 7:15 p.m. Father Phil is administrator of St. Paul Chapel, Clear Lake.

Knights plan spaghetti dinner

South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a spaghetti dinner on Friday, Dec. 19, from 5 to 7 p.m. Adults \$7, children (5-12) \$3. Dinner includes spaghetti, salad, garlic toast and coffee. Carry-out available.

Rosary Society candy and bake sale

Fort Wayne — Precious Blood Church, 1515 Barthold St., will have a candy and bake sale Saturday, Dec. 20, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 21, from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. in the school gym.

Holiday Christmas concert

Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Parish will host a Christmas concert Sunday, Dec. 28, at 7 p.m. in the church. This concert is free.

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers needed for Hospice Home

Fort Wayne — Volunteers are needed to assist the agency in a variety of roles. Duties include patient support and clerical support. Garden volunteers are also needed to maintain the Seasons of Life perennial garden.

Volunteer training is being planned. Call Ann Blue at (260) 435-3235 or visit www.vnhh.org for information.

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Fort Wayne — The Franciscan Center Clothes Closet is in need of volunteers. Call (260) 744-3977 for information.

Erin's House seeks good listeners

Fort Wayne — Erin's House is seeking volunteers who are good listeners with a caring and compassionate heart for children and young adults ages 3 to 25. Call (260) 423-2466 for information.

Volunteer for St. Mary Soup Kitchen

Fort Wayne — St. Mary Parish is in need of regular volunteers for the soup kitchen on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Additional substitutes are needed for all days and shifts. Interested persons 16 and older should call Carolyn Ransom (260) 750-8373. Some lifting required.

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TV Mass schedule for January

2008	Feast Day	Fort Wayne 10:30 a.m. WISE-TV, Ch. 33	South Bend 10:30 a.m. WNDU-TV, Ch. 16
Jan. 4	Epiphany of the Lord	Father Dave Ruppert St. Therese Fort Wayne	Father David Scheidler, CSC St. Adalbert South Bend
Jan. 11	Baptism of the Lord	Father Dominique Carboneau St. Aloysius, Yoder	Father Neil Wack, CSC Christ the King South Bend
Jan. 18	Second Sunday of Ordinary Time	Father Robert Schulte Cathedral Fort Wayne	Father James Kendzieski, OFM St. Francis Friary Mishawaka
Jan. 25	Third Sunday of Ordinary Time	Bishop John M. D'Arcy Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend	Father Bob Lengerich St. Pius X Granger

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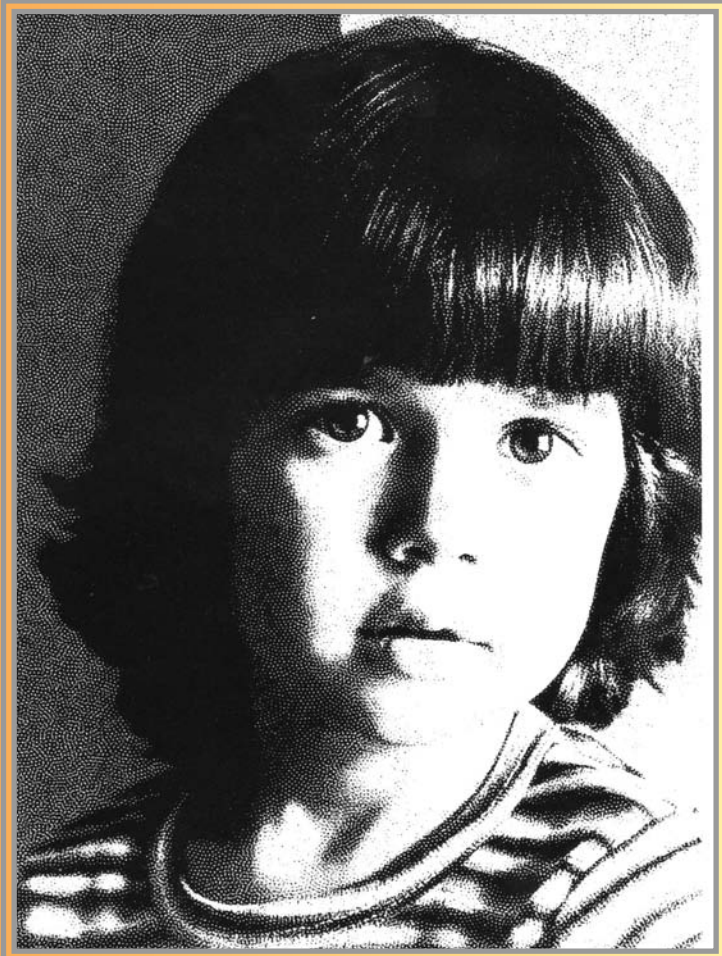
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